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GRAFTON CHRISTIAN CHURCH
150th Anniversary
May, 1984

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CRAFTON CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Located on Brick Church Road,
Grafton, York County, Virginia

Mailing address
for church and parsonage:

43 Grafton Drive
Grafton, VA 23692

Telephones: Church (804) 898-7621
Parsonage 898-5959

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PAGES FROM THE PAST

A Collection of Historical Material

In Honor of

The 150th Anniversary

of the Founding

of Grafton Christian Church

on May 11, 1834

Alice C. Massay and George E. Massay
Editors

James D. Massay
Researcher

ABOUT THIS BOOK . . .

The idea for this book came from research that our son, Jim, has done for a thesis on the history of Grafton Christian Church and Lebanon Church of Christ, Lee Hall. Many of the documents were discovered by him. Some of the other material came from papers that belonged to Mr. A. J. Renforth and were passed on to us by Mrs. Renforth.

Grafton Christian Church has a noble and exciting history. It was an influential congregation during those early years when its members and ministers took a courageous stand for what they believed to be right. It passed through difficult times -- times that caused many churches to close, never to open their doors again. Apparently, there was a period during the Civil War and just afterward when no worship services were held, but the congregation was soon reestablished. We may be grateful that Grafton has a continuous history of 150 years, and even longer, since it came directly from Grafton Baptist Church, which was founded in 1777.

Today members take pride in the 150-year-old original building and the many facilities that have been added and improvements that have been made, often by members themselves who have given countless hours of volunteer work. Recent additions include a brick patio and wrought-iron railing in front of the church entrance and a cemetery wall. Outside shutters have been ordered for the sanctuary, as old pictures show that it had shutters in earlier years. The congregation continues in the tradition of its founders not only by caring for the buildings but also by taking an interest in controversial issues of importance in today's world.

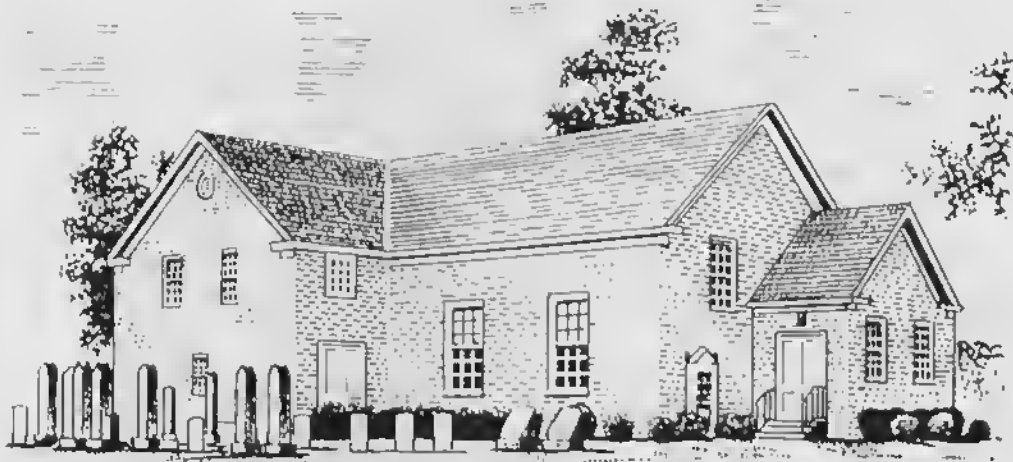
Having completed 150 years of service in the name of Christ to the community and the world beyond, Grafton Christian Church looks forward to further service in His name in the days that lie ahead.

George and Alice Massay

April, 1984

Grafton Christian Church

Disciples of Christ



Established 1834
GRAFTON, VIRGINIA

Enter to Worship

Depart to Serve

Bulletin cover used since September, 1973

Grafton Christian Church

Disciples of Christ

One of the oldest churches in York County, Virginia, Grafton Christian Church was founded May 11, 1834. In that year, the sanctuary which is still in use was constructed of bricks made by hand on the property. It was the only brick church in the county at the time and was known to local residents as "Brick Church."

The founding members of Grafton Christian Church, influenced by the teachings of Alexander Campbell, sought to restore the New Testament Church. They believed that if this were done it would lead to the unity of all Christians. *Restoration* and *unity* were watchwords of the early members. They felt that the church, rather than being united by creeds, was divided by them, so they insisted that there be no creed other than the New Testament, interpreted according to the dictates of each person's conscience and understanding. They believed that churches should be congregationally governed and were distrustful of any clerical hierarchy.

Campbell proposed acceptance of the old slogan, "Where the scriptures speak, we speak; where the scriptures are silent, we are silent." Another slogan which influenced the early leaders of the Christian Church was, "In faith, unity; in opinion, liberty; in all things, charity." In line with their inclusive view of the church, they practiced open communion from the beginning.

During the Civil War the Grafton Christian Church building was used as a hospital by the Southern Army, and soldiers are buried in unmarked graves in the cemetery. Later the Northern Army made the church into a picket post, and on the west side of the building one of the window sills has marks still visible where a horse chewed on it. On the east wall there is evidence that cannon fire struck the church in this period.

In 1949 Sunday school rooms were added, and in 1953 the sanctuary was remodeled. In 1963 a fellowship and education building was constructed.

Today, in the tradition of its founders, Grafton Church continues to seek a wide fellowship, exemplified by open communion and open membership. Cooperation with other Christians is practiced wherever and whenever possible. It is this church's belief that its members are not the only Christians, but that they should strive to be Christians only.

PHOTOGRAPHS ON OPPOSITE PAGE

Clockwise from top right:

Church building as it has appeared in recent years -- original building, 1834; education wing, 1948-49; front vestibule, dedicated in 1954

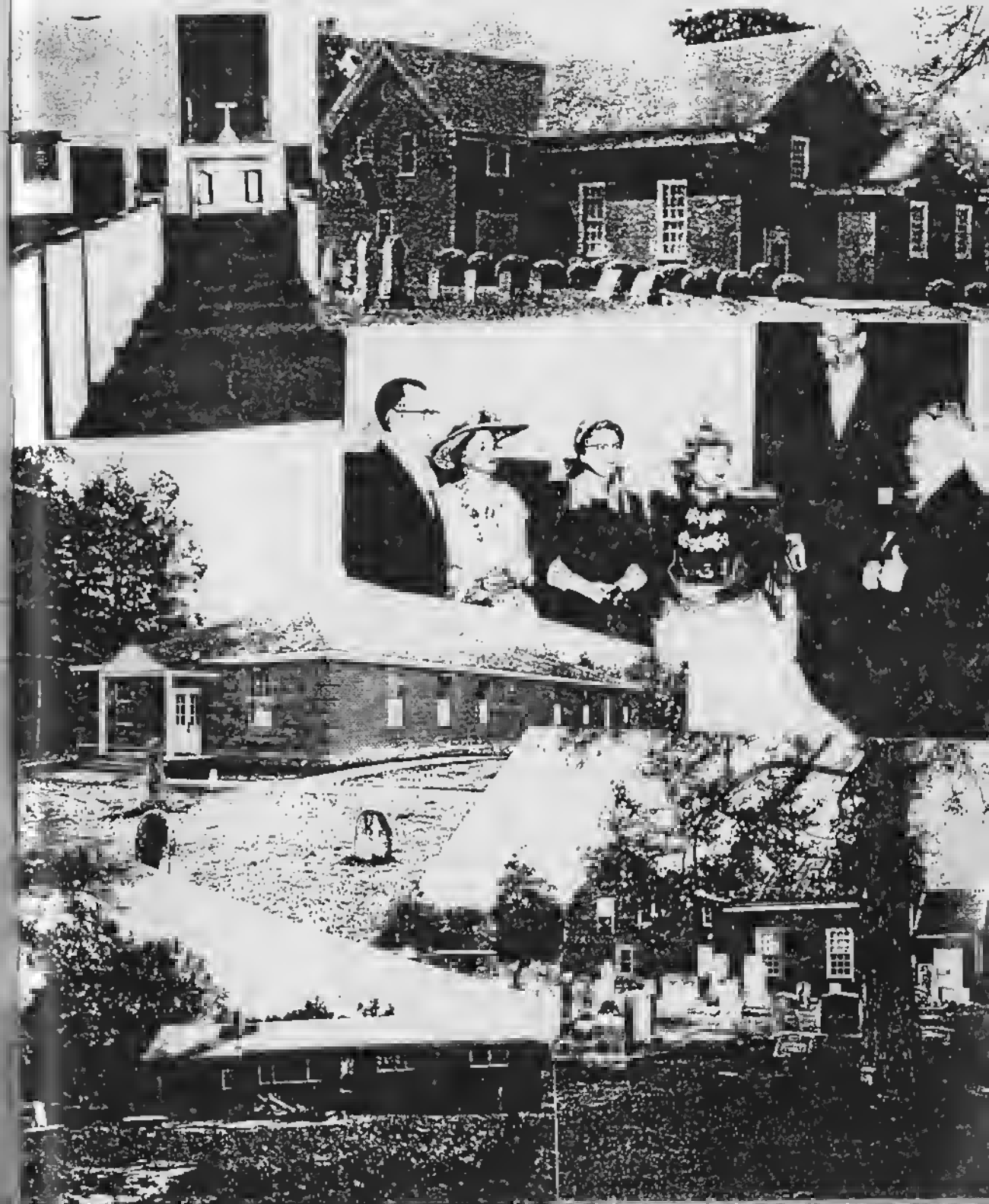
Scene from 125th Anniversary Pageant (left to right) William L. Nottingham, Cora Thomas, Hazel Curtis, Jane Marriott, Elijah Wilkerson, Ralph Meredith

East side of church building and cemetery (part of education building in background at left)

Parsonage, completed in fall, 1962

Education building, completed 1964

Interior of sanctuary showing new pews which were installed in June, 1963



Excerpts from History of Grafton Baptist Church York County, Virginia Constituted in 1777

*forerunner of Grafton
Christian Church*

Written

By The Rev. L. Peyton Little (in 1932)

...

The early Grafton Church was started before the Commonwealth of Virginia and antedated the Government of the United States. Grafton had been an organized body of believers for four years before Lord Cornwallis surrendered to General Washington in 1781, almost at the very door of this church, for her house of worship was located on the outskirts of Yorktown. Briefly summarized, the early history of the church may be set down as follows:

Elijah Baker planted it, Joshua Morris watered it, John Wright cultivated it, and Matthew Wood, Robert Stacy and Ivison Lewis joined it.

Grafton was not regularly constituted until 1777, but we know that Elijah Baker labored within the bounds of this church as early as 1775, when some were awakened. Semple says, "This encouraged him to continue to visit them, and in no great while he baptised several." It was in that same year, namely 1775, that a distinguished preacher, John Leland by name, paid his first visit to Virginia. It is probable that he visited the Grafton neighborhood and left his impress upon it. Elder John Leland was born in Grafton, Massachusetts, and unless the church derived its name in some way from the place of Elder Leland's nativity, we are totally at a loss to account for the name of Grafton. This is, of course, a mere conjecture at this late date. but the high esteem in which Elder Leland was held in Virginia would indicate that it is not at all improbable. Mr. Semple is constrained to pay him this unusual compliment: "As a preacher he was probably the most popular of any that ever resided in this state."

(Mr. Semple was Robert B. Semple, who wrote History of Virginia Baptists in 1810.)

The usual custom in that early day was to name the first Baptist church constituted in a county after the county in which it was located--witness the adjacent counties of Mathews, Gloucester, Warwick and James City. This being true, how shall we account for the first church constituted in York County not being called the "York Baptist Church"? Perhaps, John Leland named it, or his admirers named it after his hometown, Grafton.

. . .

John Wright became a convert to the service of the Redeemer under the preaching of Elder Elijah Baker in York County and was baptised by him in 1776. He began at once to preach the gospel himself, and having satisfied his brethren that he possessed the requisite qualifications, they ordained him. In 1777 when Grafton Church was constituted he became their first pastor, remaining in that position for some time, perhaps until the day of his death, which occurred in 1795. . . .

While we cannot say with certainty that John Leland visited the Grafton neighborhood prior to the formation and naming of the church, yet the strong presumption is that he did do so. However, we have his own account of what happened there only a few years after the church was constituted. It may have been during the pastorate of Elder John Wright that this man from Grafton, Massachusetts preached at Grafton, in Virginia. Elder Leland thus describes his visit and the indelible impression left upon his own mind and heart.

"My field of preaching was from Orange down to York, about 120 miles. From November 1779 to July 1780, I baptized 130 the chiefest of whom professed to be the seals of my ministry. As this was the first time that ever such work attended my ministry, it was refreshing indeed; nor can I think of it now, without soft emotions of heart. The chiefest of my success was in York, where Lord Cornwallis and the British army were made prisoners in October 1781. Matthew Wood, Robert Stacey and Thomas Cheesman (all preachers afterwards), were the children of this revival." (Taylor's Virginia Baptist Ministers, Second series, p. 33)

. . .

We have seen that Elder John Wright became the first pastor of Grafton, and that he probably continued to fill that office until his death in 1795. Elder John Gayle was chosen pastor in 1796, and as this was only one year after the death of Elder Wright, we presume he was the second pastor of Grafton. In 1801, John Gayle and Matthew Wood were the delegates from Grafton to the Dover Association. Elder Gayle continued to represent the Grafton Church at the Dover Association for the next several years, and in 1804 he was one of three preachers selected to preach on Sunday during the sessions of that body. In 1805 Grafton enjoyed a gracious revival which is mentioned in Semple's "History of Va. Baptists," (Beale's Revision) p. 151.

York County Va. Deed Bk. 7, Page 494. June 16, 1806.

Whereas the meeting house commonly called Grafton, lying and being in York County and Commonwealth of Virginia used and occupied as a house of public worship by a congregation of that Denomination of Christians who style themselves Baptists is in a ruinous state of decay, and said congregation being desirous to repair and enlarge the same, and

Whereas the said meeting house stands on the land of Richard Garrett Junior, which land or any part thereof the said Garrett is unwilling to sell or alien; But willing and meaning to secure to said congregation and their successors of the Baptist Society the free use and occupancy of said house, together with a lot of land to the said house annexed for the purpose of a Burying ground to them the said Society of Baptists and their successors forever. But not meaning nor intending to alien or convey a Fee of any kind or description whatsoever. And moreover the sd Garrett reserves to himself and his successors a certain condition, the performance of which on the part of the sd. Society of Baptists, shall only give validity to this covenant, contract and agreement, which condition is as hereafter more fully expressed. That sd. Society shall repair and they and their successors shall keep in reasonable repair the sd. meetinghouse called Grafton. And whereas, the intentions and meaning of the contracting parties have been thus fully explained and declared.

Now this indenture made this 16th day of June in the year of our Lord Christ 1806 between Richard Garrett of York Co. Commonwealth of Va. as the one part and the Society of Baptists occupying, useing (sic) and frequenting sd. meetinghouse called Grafton, of the other part; Witnesseth that the sd. Richard Garrett Jr. for himself, his heirs and successors, each and every of them, Doth covenant, contract, bargain and agree with the sd. Society of Baptists useing and frequenting sd. meetinghouse called Grafton, that they, the sd. Society and their successors of the Baptist profession shall freely and fully without let or impediment use, occupy and enjoy the sd. Meeting house called Grafton together with a lot of land to said house annexed for the purpose of a burying ground by 4 posts numbered in figures 1, 2, 3, 4, on the condition hereafter mentioned. And the said Richard Garrett Junior for himself, his heirs and successors, doth covenant, contract and agree with said Society that if he the said Richard Garrett, his heirs, successors or any of them shall on any pretense whatever, except as hereafter provided, interrupt or in any degree hinder the said Society or their successors of the Baptist profession in the use or occupancy of said house and lot of land, then the said Garrett, his heirs or successors shall pay to the said Society or their successors the sum of \$5000., as a penalty for the breach of this covenant. Provided and it is the intention and meaning of the contracting parties that the said Society and their successors do repair and at all times keep in reasonable repair the said meeting house, otherwise the said house and lot of land to be and remain at the sole disposal of the said Richard Garrett Junior and his heirs as fully as if this contract had never been made. In witness whereof the said Richard Garrett Junior hath hereunto set his hand and seal the day and year about written, 16th June, 1806.

Richard Garrett seal

Signed and sealed in presence of
Charles McPherson; _____ Taylor.

"Elder Matthew Wood, a pious and useful preacher, still resides in this church, but Elder Gayle, who moved from Mathews, was anno. 1796 chosen pastor. They had in the year 1805 under the united labors of Elders Gayle and Wood, one of the most heavenly revivals: not less than about 330 or 340 were baptized. After the revival they had a winnowing season. Many that seemed to be somewhat, proved to be nothing. Yet there is still a large and respectable church." (Semple's "History of Va. Baptists." Beale's Revision, p. 151)

[at the meetings of the Dover Association of Baptist churches]

For several years Grafton was represented by ordained ministers, such as Elders Caleb Fisher and Benjamin Bullock, but we could not say positively that they were pastors of the church; but in the year 1827, a Scotchman, Peter Ainslie, became their pastor. Elder Ainslie, was born seven miles from Edinburg on November 27, 1788, and came to America in 1811. In 1821 he moved to Gloucester County and preached in the counties of Gloucester, Mathews, Middlesex, and King and Queen. He served the Mathews church for several years and was first pastor of Ebenezer, in Gloucester. From these churches he came to Grafton in 1827, and in a sketch written by himself he tells how he entered upon the work at Grafton Baptist Church:

"In the spring of 1827 I extended my labors to York County and in the summer of this year a great work of grace commenced at Grafton, in that County, and large numbers united with all the Baptist churches of that section. I was called to take charge of the Grafton Church, which I accepted and in the fall of that year I engaged an overseer for my farm in Gloucester and moved with my wife and children to Yorktown, carrying with us two servant women and their children." (Frederick Arthur Hodge's "The Plea and the Pioneers in Virginia," 1905; p. 179)

From the same author, page 180, this additional statement is made: "After settling at Yorktown, Bro. Ainslie became very popular as a preacher and was greeted with large audiences wherever he preached."

The minutes of the Dover Association bear mute testimony to Elder Ainslie's statement that "large numbers united with all the Baptist churches of that section," for Grafton alone reported 150 baptized that year (1827) and their membership was 579.

The Dover Association met with the Grafton church on October 11-13, 1828, and the pastor Peter Ainslie with Thomas Curtis and Robert H. Leigh were the delegates. They reported 34 baptisms and a membership of 535. The Dover had 1,437 baptisms during that year and a grand total membership of 14,403.

For the next several years another preacher, Kemp P. Elliott, is reported along with Elder Peter Ainslie. He became the assistant pastor of Grafton. In 1829 the membership was 484; in 1830 it was only 385. The next year, 1831, they baptized 20, and had 397 members. In the report of State of Churches this comment was made about the situation at Grafton: "Grafton, York County. No special outpouring of the Holy Spirit, Nothing interesting."

And then came the year of 1832, that memorable year, in which the Grafton Church was rent asunder by internal discussion and dissension. The Report on the State of Churches contains the paragraph: "Grafton -- Nothing of much interest or importance has occurred in this church. Elder Kemp P. Elliott, labors as assistant Pastor. Number baptized 13. Total white members 245; colored 196 -- who number 441. Peter Ainslie, Pastor."

Notwithstanding this outwardly calm demeanor of the Grafton church, yet later developments during the meeting of this Association revealed the fact that all was not peace within. That, in fact, the pastor of Grafton, Elder Peter Ainslie, had fallen under the censure of his brethren by adopting the view of the "Reformers," and his name was specifically mentioned as one of those referred to in the resolution presented. For seven long years a controversial spirit had prevailed throughout the Dover Association on account of the introduction of some views of Alexander Campbell, which were contrary to those held by Baptists.

The brethren in the Dover seem to have striven earnestly and patiently to prevent a division. The Dover was one of the last Associations throughout the country to act, and this tardiness was caused, not by a lack of "vigilance," but must have been due to "greater charity." A historian of the Disciple denomination bears testimony to this fact in the following paragraph:

"The separation of the Reformers from the regular Baptist churches was as we have seen, accomplished by a series of local and minor explosions rather than by any single event of decisive importance. In the nature of the case, considering the lack of centralized authority among the Baptists and the total rejecting of any such thing among the Reformers, it could not have occurred in any other way. By the end of the year

1830, the separation was fairly complete in most places, though there were certain scattered communities in which, because of greater charity or, less vigilance, the line had not yet been sharply drawn." Religion Follows the Frontier. A History of the Disciples of Christ, by Winfred Ernest Garrison, p. 145)

The same author, on page 137, makes this additional statement: "The Dover Association (including Richmond, Va.) in December, 1830 condemned a long list of errors, and two years later withdrew fellowship from six ministers who called themselves Reformers."

The brethren in the Dover had been patient and long-suffering, but there is a time when "patience ceases to be a virtue," and they realized something had to be done to counteract, or check, the inroads that were being made upon the Baptist ranks. So it came to pass that when the Dover Association met at the Four Mile Baptist Church, in Henrico County, on October 13-15, 1832, the initial step was taken. The minutes of that meeting state that it was on Saturday, October 13, that the following action was taken: "On motion of Elder J. B. Jeter, it was resolved, that _____ be appointed a committee to take under consideration the unfortunate divisions by which some of our churches are agitated, by reason of the introduction of new principles, both of faith and practice, lately introduced under the specious name of Reform and report thereon on Monday morning. Whereupon the moderator filled the blank with the names of Elders John Kerr, J. B. Jeter, Peter Ainslie, Phillip Montague and James B. Taylor."

The reader will note that Grafton's pastor, Elder Peter Ainslie, is the third preacher named on this committee. When the Association convened on Monday, October 15, this Select Committee made their report, which is duly recorded in the minutes of the Dover, as follows: "Elder John Kerr from the Select Committee, to whom was referred the unfortunate divisions in some of the churches, growing out of the introduction of the religious principles and practices of Mr. A. Campbell and his disciples, reported the following preamble and resolutions, which were adopted with but very few dissenting voices.

Following 10 paragraphs - full text of "Dover Decrees"

"The Select Committee appointed to consider and report what ought to be done in reference to the new doctrines and practices which have disturbed the peace and harmony of some of the churches composing this association, met at the home of Elder Miles Turpin and having invited and obtained the aid and counsel of Elders Andrew Broadbuss, Eli Ball, John Micow, William Hill, Miles Turpin and Brother Erastus T. Montague, after due deliberation, respectfully report the following preamble and resolution for the consideration and adoption of the Association:

"This Association, having been from its origin, blessed with uninterrupted harmony, and a high degree of religious prosperity, has seen with unspeakable regret, within a few years past, the spirit of speculation, controversy and strife, growing up among some of the ministers and churches within its bounds. This unhappy state of things has evidently been produced by the preaching and writing of Alexander Campbell, and his adherents. After having deliberately and prayerfully examined the doctrines held and propogated (sic) by them, and waited long to witness their practical influence upon the churches, and upon society in general, we are thoroughly convinced that they are doctrines, not according to godliness, but subversive of the true spirit of the Gospel of Jesus Christ -- disorganizing and demoralizing in their tendency; and therefore, ought to be disavowed and resisted by all the lovers of truth and sound piety.

"It is needless to specify, and refute the errors held and taught by them; this has been often done, and as often have the doctrines quoted from their writings been denied, with the declaration that they are misrepresented or misunderstood. If after more than seven years investigation, the most pious and intelligent men in the land are unable to understand what they speak and write, it surely is an evidence of some radical defect in the things taught, or in the mode of teaching. Their views of sin, faith, repentance, regeneration, baptism, the agency of the Holy Spirit, Church government, the Christian ministry, and the whole scheme of Christian benevolence are, we believe, contrary to the plan, letter and spirit of the New Testament of our Lord and Saviour.

9. "By their practical influence, churches long blessed with peace and prosperity, have been thrown into wrangling and discord, principles long held sacred by the best and most enlightened men that ever lived or died, are vilified and ridiculed as 'school divinity,' 'sectarian dogmas,' ec. Ministers who have counted all things but loss, for

the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus are reprobated and denounced as 'visionary dreamers,' 'mystifiers,' 'blind leaders of the blind,' 'hireling priests' ec. The church in which they call it persecution to be separated, is held up to public scorn as 'Babylon the Mother of Harlots, and abominations (sic) of the earth.'

"The most opprobrious epithets are unsparingly applied to principles and practices which we think are clearly taught in the word of God, and which we hold dear to our hearts. While they arrogate to themselves the title of 'Reformers,' it is lamentably evident, that no sect in Christendom needs reformation more than they do.

"While they boast of superior light and knowledge, we can but lament, in their life and conversation, the absence of that wisdom 'that is from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy (sic)? In fine, the writings of Alexander Campbell, and the spirit and manner of those who profess to admire his writings and sentiments, appear to us remarkably destitute of 'the mind that was in Christ Jesus'; of that divine love 'which suffereth long, and is kind, envieth not, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, does not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil? Wherever these writings and sentiments have, to any extent, been introduced into our churches, the spirit of hypercriticism, 'vain janglings and strife about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers,' have chilled the spirit of true devotion and put an end to Christian benevolence and harmony.

"If the opprobrious epithets, and bitter demunciations so liberally heaped upon us, by Mr. Campbell and his followers are deserved, they as pious and honorable men cannot desire to live in communion with us; and if they are undeserved and designedly slanderous this of itself would forbid our holding them in Christian fellowship. If indeed, they have found the long lost key of knowledge, and are the only persons, since the days of the apostles, who have entered and explored the Divine Arcanum, it is due to themselves, to purblind Christendom -- to the world -- to truth -- to God, that they should in obedience to the divine command, clothed in the shining garments of truth and righteousness, walk out of 'Babylon,' and concentrating their light, exhibit a true sample of the 'ancient order of things'; and diffuse around them a blaze of 'love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.' Until they do this,

grave and thinking men will doubt their high pretentions (sic), for 'by their fruits you shall know them.' It would seem that conscientious, unobtrusive, holy men, whose hearts are sickened with the depravity of the times, and who mourn a sad and general departure from truth and holiness, would voluntarily come out from 'the present corrupt order of things,' and hold sweet communion with one another, and with God, let their light so shine that others seeing their good works, might be induced to glorify their father in heaven; but alas! they appear to be a strange antisectarian dogmatical sect, who live only in the fire of strife and controversy, and who seek to remain in connection with the existing churches, that they may, with the greater facility obtain materials for feeding the disastrous flame.

"In every respect of the case then, a separation is indispensably necessary. The cause of truth and righteousness require it -- the best interests of all the parties concerned demand it.

"We, therefore, the assembled ministers and delegates of the Dover Association, after much prayerful deliberation, do hereby affectionately recommend to the churches in our connection, to separate from their communion, all such persons as are promoting controversy and discord, under the specious name of 'Reformers.' That the line of distinction may be clearly drawn, so that all who are concerned may understand it, we feel it our duty to declare, that, whereas, Peter Ainslie, John Dreval, Matthew W. Webber, Thomas N. Henley, John Richards, and Dudley Atkinson, ministers within the bounds of this association, have voluntarily assumed the name of 'Reformers,' in its party application, by attending a meeting publicly advertised for that party; and by communing with, and otherwise promoting the views of the members of that party, who have been separated from the fellowship and communion of regular Baptist Churches.

"Resolved: That this Association cannot consistently and conscientiously receive them, nor any other ministers maintaining their views, as members of their body; nor can they in future act in concert with delegates from any church or churches, that may encourage or countenance their ministration."

Baptist point of view!

The attentive reader will note that Grafton's pastor, Elder Peter Ainslie, is the first minister mentioned in this list of Reformers, and perhaps no other church was so conspicuous and shining an example of the wreckage wrought by the 'Reformation.'

Four days after the above preamble and resolution was adopted, the Religious Herald published an editorial on the meeting of the Dover, which included this paragraph: "The subject of reformation which has so long distracted many of our churches, filling them with discord and dissensions, was referred to a select committee who reported the subjoined preamble and resolutions, adopted without debate, and nearly unanimously. About ² churches and as many ministers are more or less affected with these doctrines, and will probably not attend the next annual meeting; or if they should appear, they will be rejected. Where the majority of any church have become reformers, the minority, on separating themselves from them will, we presume, be received by the Association and recognized as the true church." (Religious Herald, October 19, 1832, p. 2, col. 6)

These resolutions left no doubt in the minds of many that a separation was imperative and unavoidable, but others seem to have clung to the hope that in some way they would be rescinded, or modified, at the next meeting of the Dover. In 1832 the resolutions were passed, but it remained for the next association to put them in practice. So the Dover Association that convened in Williamsburg in 1833 may be set down as the time when the dividing line was drawn between the Baptist Church and the 'Reformers' or the followers of Alexander Campbell. As the Association met with the Zion Baptist Church, we presume its sessions were held in the "Old Powder Horn" of Revolutionary fame, which was the regular meeting house of the Zion Church at that time. This old brick, octagonal-shaped building, was surrounded by a ten-foot brick wall two feet thick, and located twenty-one feet from the building. It constituted a rather strong fortress for that day and time, and was certainly a peculiar place for a Baptist Church to hold its services. Nevertheless, the Zion Church used this old building for twenty-six years. This public magazine, or arsenal was built in 1715 and when trouble arose between England and the colonists, the Royal Governor Dunmore removed the powder from the old building. This act so exasperated Patrick Henry and aroused the colonists that they took up arms and so threatening was their attitude that the Governor felt forced to flee from the Capitol at Williamsburg and "fixed his residence for the present on board his Majesty's ship, the Fowry, lying at York." This "Old Powder Horn" is credited with furnishing the spark that set off the American Revolution in Virginia, and culminated in the separation of the English colonies from the Crown. Now, in 1833, the Dover Association, meeting in this same old building, is rent asunder and another separation is about to take place -- a separation of brethren who had known and loved each other for years.

P. 11 We are indebted to a historian of the Disciple denomination, Rev. Frederick Arthur Hodge for the information that still another historic building in Williamsburg figured in this conflict. He states that the course of procedure of the Dover Association at this memorable meeting in 1833 was agreed upon at a pre-breakfast conference held in the celebrated "Raleigh Tavern," where so many important state matters had been determined by the civic leaders prior to and during the Revolution. It is a rather significant and interesting fact, that these two old buildings, the "Powder Magazine" and the "Raleigh Tavern," that figured so conspicuously in the Revolution of 1776, should also have a prominent part in the troubles of 1833.

Now let us see what the situation was at that time with reference to Grafton. From the Dover Minutes we learn that on Tuesday, September 24th, 1833, when the Association met in Williamsburg: "Two letters were read from Grafton Church -- one from the majority, and one from the minority, the latter having withdrawn and formed a separate church. The letter from the minority was received and the delegates of that part of the late church declared entitled to seats."

Their delegates were Thomas H. McWilliams, W. Pettri; and William McCandish. They reported only 131 members. As Grafton reported a membership of 441 the year before, we presume that the rest, some 300 or more, stood by the pastor, Elder Peter Ainslie. The Dover minutes for Wednesday morning, September 25th, contain this explanation and action of the Association, which proves conclusively that the Dover brethren were willing to go the "Second Mile" with Grafton's pastor: "Elder P. Ainslie having, during the yesterday evening session, requested the Association, to hear him in his own defense, which request after some discussion he withdrew, It was on motion,

P. 12 "Resolved, That a committee be appointed to wait on Elder Ainslie and inform him that the Association will hear him in defense of the injury which he alleges to have been inflicted on him by resolutions adopted by the last Association."

In the afternoon session, "The committee appointed to wait on Mr. Ainslie, reported that he declined availing himself of the privilege offered him."

P. 12 Elder Peter Ainslie may have continued for a time the pastorate of the Reform element of Grafton Church, but according to a sketch of him found in Rev. Frederick Arthur Hodge's "The Plea and the Pioneers in Virginia," pp. 182-183, it could not have been very long after the meeting of the Dover at Williamsburg in the Fall of 1833, for this sketch states that,

"In 1834 he married Miss Matilda Gregory, of King William County, and soon after settled in that county. He was at that time acting in the capacity of the first general evangelist of Tidewater district, having a field extending from the Blue Ridge to the blue sea. His eldest daughter had married Bro. Joseph Bohannon, and he had placed the rest of his children in a good boarding-school, intending to give them a good education. Directly after his second marriage, however, he again gathered his children around him in his new home. The joys of this reunited family was short-lived. Bro. Ainslie owned a Negro man whose wife was owned in King and Queen, and was about to be sold. The slave appealed to Bro. Ainslie to go over and buy her. Accordingly, they got into a boat to cross the Mattaponi River. It was in February, and the river was just breaking up after a heavy freeze. The boat was caught between two large cakes of ice and crushed, and they were precipitated into the river. Persons on the shore saw them, but were powerless to save them. Again and again they tried to climb up on the sheets of ice, but in the struggle the rotten ice would break beneath their weight. At last they sank beneath icy waters. The body of Bro. Ainslie was not found until six weeks later."

This then was the tragic ending of the man who had served the Mathews Church for several years, was the first pastor of Ebenezer in Gloucester County, and the last pastor of the First Grafton Baptist Church.

The building in which this church worshipped for so many years was located just across the road and directly in front of the present (1932) brick building of the Grafton Christian Church.

"THE CAT OUT OF THE BAG,"

OR

THE REV. PETER AINSLIE UNMASKED!

TO THE RELIGIOUS PUBLIC:

My apology for addressing you, will be found in the fact, that all other attempts to bring Mr. Ainslie to trial, have been found unavailing: Let it not be said that I have come forward to attack him. Such is not the fact. It will be seen in the sequel that I am only repelling his attacks, repeatedly made, and long endured.

In the end that this unpleasant controversy may be rightly understood, a concise narrative becomes indispensable.

Sometime during the last Summer, sixteen or seventeen persons applied by letter to the Church at Grafton, (of which Mr. Ainslie is Pastor,) to be dismissed from that Church, with a view to form a new Church at Denbeigh, stating their intention to call Brother Samuel M. Allen as their Pastor. To this request, entirely proper in itself, and against which it then was, and yet is impossible to offer any reasonable objection, Mr. Ainslie manifested a most unchristian and unbecoming opposition.

Notwithstanding the Church at Grafton, however, the Church at Denbeigh was formed.

Shown above is a fragment of the first page of a 12-page pamphlet, "The Cat Out of the Bag," attacking Peter Ainslie, apparently published in 1829. The writer, G. Lane Corbin, along with several other members of Grafton Baptist Church, had evidently formed a Baptist church in Denbeigh (spelled Denbeigh in the pamphlet). Corbin charged that Ainslie at first favored formation of the new congregation but later changed his mind. The controversy included allegations of drunkenness against some of those who formed the new church and counter charges of possible dishonesty against Ainslie.

The tattered last page of "The Cat Out of the Bag" is shown below. On the following page is material from the Millennial Harbinger, a journal published by Alexander Campbell, showing that Peter Ainslie by the year 1832 was deeply involved in the reform movement led by Campbell.

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self, yet whenever he shall ask a trial, or the public voice force him into one, I promise by other testimony, infinitely more worthy than his own, to prove him totally unworthy of the high and sacred office of a bishop.

I should consider it an insult to the intelligence of the public, at this time, to offer any other proof of the guilt of Mr. Ainslie than that of the many shameful evasions and flat contradictions with which his answers abound. Nevertheless, that he may be without even the pretext under which he has heretofore endured shelter, I beg the reader's permission to subjoin the following short document:

"Being called upon by Brother Allen and Brother G. L. Corbin, for a certificate in regard to the report of a committee of Grafton Church, in which they are both named, I cheerfully state that in signing that report I did not at the time, nor do I now, wish to impugn their religion or persons; and had I reflected maturely, at the time, I never should have sanctioned any thing reflecting directly or indirectly on them; both of whom I love as members of the same Christian family.

"Given under my hand this 17th day of February, 1829.

THOMAS CURTIS,

President of the Committee."

Every custom and rule heretofore held sacred among Christians, having been disregarded by the individual noticed in the foregoing

document, and the same being now become the order

of the day. In short every possible outrage upon the feelings and characters of others, being as it were the very element in which the Pastor of Grafton delights to move, and his oppressions, misdeeds and slanders having become intolerable, I do hereby solemnly and confidently appeal to every honest man, to read attentively and affix on the foregoing pages, the worth or demerit they deserve.

G. / LANE CORBIN.

CO-OPERATION.

IT is the wish of many of the disciples and friends of the Reformation, in Virginia, that brother Ainslie be kept, during the ensuing year, constantly in the field, doing the work of an Evangelist; and that he have liberty to devote his time, according to his own views of expediency, in such sections of the country as may most need his labors. The present crisis in Virginia requires some man, mighty in the scriptures, to visit the brethren, and to address the public; especially, as there are so many false representations of the views and designs of the brethren who are devoted to the primitive institutions of christianity. We do hope, that the brethren will not forget, as indeed they do not generally, to be fellow-helpers to the truth, by their contributions to the wants of those who labor all the

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MILLENNIAL HARBINGER.

1832

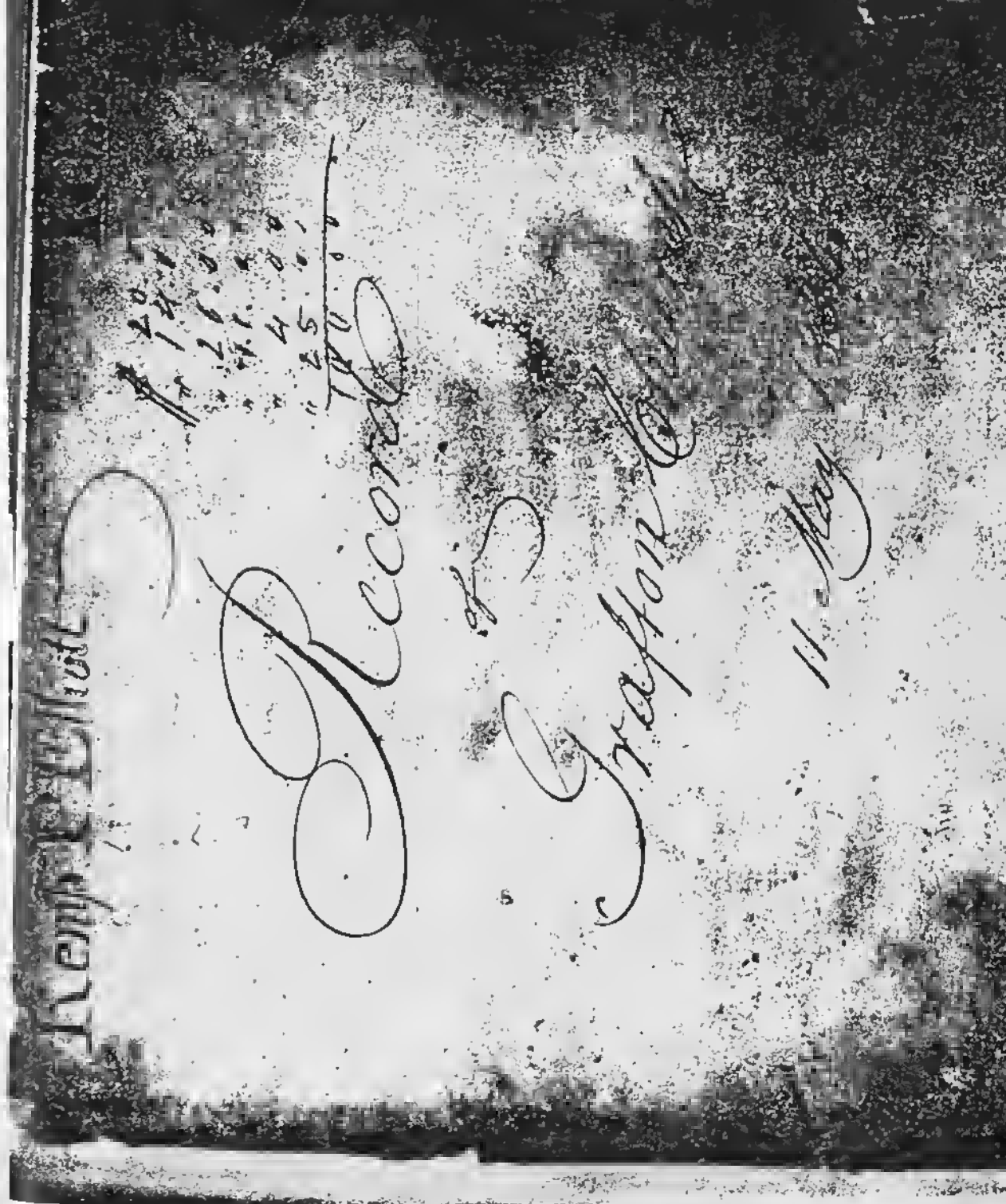
time in the word and teaching. The churches around Richmond, who are expected to concur in these measures, may find some brother in Richmond to whom they can forward their contributions, who will have an opportunity of communicating to brother Ainslie at proper intervals. Brother William Bootwright is, it is believed, every way competent to attend on this business; and his devotedness to the cause of truth is such as to warrant the hope of his acceptance of this office, and attention to the duties which the brethren may require him to discharge for them. Will you, brother Campbell, as we have no medium of public communication in Eastern Virginia, lay this matter before the brethren, and request their attention to it, and thus oblige the disciples who wish to co-operate in the good work of the Lord?

STEPHEN.

The suggestion appears to us every way reasonable, just, and expedient, in the present crisis. If brother Ainslie can be induced to leave his family and devote his whole time to the work of the Lord, the brethren, no doubt, will cheerfully contribute and co-operate, through an agent in Richmond, for his support in the work; and there is none more fitting than William Bootwright, and I think none will more cheerfully attend to it. Brother Ainslie's well-tryed faithfulness, experience, and profound knowledge of the oracles of God, together with his extensive acquaintance, eminently qualify him for rendering to the cause of reformation very essential services. For the wise, a single word is enough.

EDITOR.

The Editor was Alexander Campbell.



The Congregation of Jesus Christ at
 Grafton in York County was organized the
 eleventh day of May 1834. It was composed of
 the following persons — Henry J. Elliott Pastor
 John Curtis, Frederick B. Power, Wm. Williamson Lawrence
 Shield, Thomas Ellington, Charles B. Bonwell Lewis
 Stanford, Edward Finckler, Arthur Chapman, Joseph K
 Nottingham, Wm. Bruden, John Polson, Wm. Powell
 John T. Skill, Tho^s Wynne, Tho^s Davis, Joel Henshaw
 John Garrett, Zachariah Hogg, John Hogg Jr John
 25 Hogg Jr Wm Hogg Jr Wm Hogg Jr Lewis Hogg J. Burrard
 Elliott

Female — Letitia Bonwell, Emily Shield, Virginia Curtis, Eliza
 Powell, Eliza Shield, Elizth J. Elliott, Mary M
 Ann Chapman, Ann Jordan, Elizabeth Curtis, Lucy
 Power, Elizth Nottingham, Mary Powell, Zana
 Stanford, Mary Garrett, Elizth Henshaw, Maria Hogg
 21 Sarah Hogg, Francis Hogg, Sarah Hogg, Mary Hogg
 22 Mary Kitchin, Elizth Thomas, Mahala Elliott

All of these persons had been previously
 members of a Church by the same name at the
 same place, & several had withdrawn; those re-
 maining being determined not to submit to what
 among the Baptist Churches was known to be
 the "Dover decision" having for their object the
 exclusion of all who read the few declarations of
 their own consciences or went to hear those preachers
 who favored the same; they therefore formed themselves
 into a separate congregation of keeping
 all the Ordinances of the Gospel as usually
 administered by the Baptists having
 for their object the exclusion of those

2.

no infallible Teachers but the Apostles and prophets
and no articles of belief but the old and new Testa-
ments, and the Catechism containing their Faith and
the Rules of their Behaviour as Christians.

Regarding all Protestant sects as building upon
human creeds, ^{having the same sense of} equal with the Apostles testimony,
and in many instances making void the word of God
by their traditions - and being resolved to stand perfect
in the knowledge and practice of the revealed will
of God: also regarding the Church as built only on
the foundation of the Apostles and prophets - Jesus
Christ himself being the Chief Corner Stone; and
it being the duty honor and happiness of the Church
to preserve the unity of the Spirit by the Bond of Peace -

The Church

there being but one body and one spirit, one hope, one
love, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of
all. They declare before God and each other, that
they are determined to do the whole will of God,
as far as they can understand it - to be all with one
another, when they may differ in matters of opinion -
to contend only and earnestly for the faith, humbly
submitting to the decisions - to be ever watchful for their
truth - and to speak in love to the Lord alone, as
their Prophet, Priest and King - thus giving themselves
to the Lord and one another, according to the will of
God; they have agreed to be together as members
of the Church of Christ under the government of the
Prince of Peace, to whom be honor everlastingly, Amen

Names of Members

Males	No.	Females	No.
Henry C. Elliott	1	John H. Hunt	1
John C. Hunt	2	John H. Hunt	2
William H. Hunt	3	John H. Hunt	3
John H. Hunt	4	John H. Hunt	4
John H. Hunt	5	John H. Hunt	5

Directed to be expunged by
21st August 1835

i. e. "the perfecting of the saints—to a perfect man—even to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Thus the three clauses in the 12th verse are equally ascribed to, and exclusively predicated of, the functionaries specified in the 11th;—the term *saints*, in the first clause of the 12th, being co-extensive with the "*we all*," in the first clause of the 13th—that is, *the body of Christ*, its proper and immediate antecedent. Consequently, the intention of the aforesaid gifts, have an equal reference to the whole christian community, to the end of time.

T. C.

LETTER FROM JAMES T. JOSLIN, TO THE EDITOR.

AMSTERDAM, N. Y. February 4, 1835.

Dear brother Campbell,

I WRITE a few lines to you to express my joy, that the truth of the gospel is running ground, amidst all the opposition it meets with from the various sects, who seem pledged to oppose it. What a pity! Truly, we wish they would all unite under its banner. What good might be done to the glory of God, and to their mutual happiness! For one year past I have read your Harbinger with much pleasure and profit. I feel pledged with all my heart and might to promote the reformation, in which you have been so long and so earnestly engaged. For this blessed purpose, I am exerting my humble abilities as a fellow-laborer in the good cause; neither fearing nor caring what man may say or do to me. I could here relate a mournful tale of the religious travail of my past life, which no doubt would excite both your sympathy and indignation. How many years I was kept back from the enjoyment of christian privilege, being constantly taught that I had no right to be interested into Christ, before I had an evidence from the Spirit of God, that I was born again, and could truly say, that God for Christ's sake had forgiven my sins. Thus, for almost ten years, looking for something that God had not promised in his word, I was often well nigh driven to despair. At last, however, without possessing the desired assurance, I made up my mind to venture on the gospel, had my intention intimated to the church, were received for baptism, but had to wait a few days. But, alas! what was the exercise of my mind during this short interim! I thought to go forward not pardoned could be a great sin, and to keep back appeared chilling and dreary as death; in this horrible state of mind I went forward to the water; but thanks be to God, as soon as raised from under it, my slavish fears were gone—all was peace—I went on in my joyful course. And even now, while I write this, I will rejoice and am thankful that, notwithstanding all my fears and dejections, I was enabled to obey the gospel of my Lord and Saviour, with whom I hope to reign in the world to come. You may see, dear brother, from this short sketch of my pilgrimage, that I have learned by dear bought experience, to pity those who live under such preposterous unscriptural teaching. O! how it retards the slack-tron'd mind, in having the assurance of the divine testimony, that every believing penitent has a right to be baptized for the remission of his sins, and the enjoyment of the Holy Spirit to fill him with peace and joy in believing, and of which nothing shall or can deprive him, while he continues to believe it. I mean the divine testimony, which alone can afford him just and solid ground for this blessed certainty. But I exceed my intended limits. The church in Amsterdam is but small, only forty, many of them old; but it lives in peace amongst ourselves, and to the blessed hope of a glorious immortality. And now, dear brother, I hope the blessed effects you have seen and experienced from your labors of love, will engage your exertions to continue them, notwithstanding all the hard speeches, callets, and abuse, that have been uttered against you. My prayer to God for you, myself, and all Christ's genuine disciples, is, "that we be partakers of his glory, in the same measure as we have partaken of his sufferings and death."—that none of us may bring reproach upon the good cause. Your sincere friend and brother in Christ,

JAMES T. JOSLIN.

OBITUARY NOTICES.

OUR much esteemed and beloved friend and brother SAMUEL MARSHAL, of the borough of Wallington, Penn. departed this life on Friday, February 25th, 1835, in the 74th year of his age, after a confinement of near three months. His death was the result of a pulmonary consumption, with which he had been affected many years. He bore his last illness with christian fortitude and resignation, and died in the full hope of a blessed immortality, of which he gave satisfactory evidence to such of his religious acquaintance as conversed with him in his last illness. He will long be remembered as a zealous and faithful disciple—a benevolent and useful citizen, by a large circle of respectable friends and brethren.

T. C.

BETHANY, Va. April 13th, 1835.

BELOVED BROTHER CAMPBELL,

WITH sorrow I address you, in order to inform you of the demise of one who will be long remembered and esteemed by all who knew him—one who has labored long and faithfully in the kingdom of the Lord; and by so doing, will, I feel assured, induce that praise be made to those "who turn many to righteousness, he will shine as the stars for ever and ever." The person to whom I allude is our much lamented brother PETER AINSLEY. He came to his death a few weeks since, in attempting to cross the Mississippi river. When the ice was floating rapidly, a large pierce struck the boat and crushed it, drowning brother Ainsley and two other persons who were on board with him. His body was not found until six weeks after the catastrophe. O! what a loss to our family and the disciples of Jesus have sustained! But it may with truth be said, our loss is no gain. Yes, he fought the good fight and has finished his course. His labor of love is laid up for him in heaven a crown of glory. May all the disciples emulate his labors of faith and love, in the prayer of your unworthy brother in the Lord.

W. F. M. A.

Jennings county, Indiana, June 3, 1842

There are nine churches or congregations, and some four hundred and fifty or five hundred disciples in this county. The principal proclaiming brethren who were instrumental in setting up the ancient order of things here are brothers John H. and Hickman New. We have been edified by brothers John O'Kane, Joseph Fassett, Newell Smith, Jesse Movely, J. L. Jones, &c. The congregation on Coffee Creek, ten miles from Vernal, the shiretown, is increasing more rapidly than the others—eleven additions were made there two weeks since through the labors of brother Jacob Wiliam and others. The most of the congregations meet every first day of the week to celebrate the feast by which we are saved—to sing hymns in honor of our King—in read his word—to exhort each other to more steadfastness in the faith, &c. May truth triumph, error disappear, and the knowledge of the Lord extend from shore to shore, and cover the earth as the waters do the great deep!

JOHN KING.

Yorktown, Virginia, June 20, 1842

This day closes my labors, as an evangelist, for the last twelve months. The field of labor assigned me embraced the counties of York, James City, Surry, and Elizabeth City. Though I cannot boast of great numbers, I think that those who have united with us came into the kingdom understandingly, and will prove faithful in the cause of truth. The Hickory Neck congregation in James City, has had eight additions during the last twelve months, and the church appears to be doing well. You remember, I don't not, to have preached in Hampton a few years ago. The cause has met with great opposition there from all parties. But notwithstanding the determined opposition, we have gained five additions here, making six within the last eighteen months. There are eight disciples here, two of whom are members of Crafton, meeting every Lord's day and partaking of the loaf. Our beloved brother John B. Carey, who is quite an intelligent brother, speaks for them, in the way of exhortation and teaching, and I hope will soon become a prominent of the gospel.

1842

We labor under some disadvantages in Hampton, having no meeting house. We have been in the habit of preaching in the court house, the sects having closed their doors against us; and they talk strongly of excluding us from the court house. We wish, if possible, to erect a small meeting house there, and do now call upon our brethren in Virginia to help us. One thousand dollars will enable us to build quite a commodious house of worship; and that will have a tendency to entice the audience, and thus give the people an opportunity of hearing and dealing for themselves. Will not the brethren help us in this matter? Do, brethren, respond in this call. Any brother, brethren, or congregation wishing to aid us in building a meeting house in Hampton, will please address brother John B. Carey, Hampton, Virginia, stating how much they will give.

J. W. T. R. WALSH.

Canon brother Walsh extend his labors as an occasional appointments at Norfolk? If he can, he will please forward his appointments to J. L. Hathaway of that place, who will have them published.

W. F. M. A.

Bethany, July 25, 1842.

My dear brother—Your efforts to expose error in every form, induce me to conclude that it would give you pleasure, during your absence, to receive good news even from Bethany. An individual well known in you, a liber student, having been strongly affected with one of the grossest lies ever presented to the human fallen family of Adam—Mormonism—has renounced its delusions. I ground this assertion not on my own ipse dixit, but on numerous credible witnesses. Meeting him, I stated that we had a full, perfect, and clear revelation from God of every thing pertaining to salvation; that we needed not, nor did we expect another; that the age of miracles had passed away—his reply was, "I believe in the prophecies which have been given—I expect no other, I renounce my belief in Mormonism." The person spoken of not being a member of Christ's church, I unfortunately admonished him to look into the word of life, and lose no time in becoming a servant of that Lord whose sword can prostrate all the dragons of the present or any other day.

C.

EXTRACTS FROM THE MINUTES

Of the 4th General Annual Meeting of Elders and Brethren of the Church of Christ in Indiana

WHEREAS, among the "all things," which the Apostles were commissioned to teach the disciples of Christ for their observance, we have been taught that "they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel;" and that, in primitive times, "the word of the Lord sounded out" from the congregations: and whereas, there are at present in the

More from Little's
History of Grafton
Baptist Church

[Baptist Church, the group which continued as Baptists after those who formed Grafton Christian Church separated from them]

Begin here → In 1844 Elder Amory was not only pastor of Grafton but he was also pastor of Bethel and Denbigh [Baptist] churches, and a most unusual and distressing incident is reported to him by a doctor, a member of the Grafton Baptist Church, who was prominently connected with it. This account is prefaced by a statement of Elder Amory, which is dated from Grafton Church, York County, and is to be found in the Religious Herald (Richmond) for November 14, 1844, and is as follows:

"Grafton Ch., York County, For the Religious Herald
York Co. Va. Nov 1, 1844.

Dear Bro. Sands, -

The enclosed letter I received yesterday from my friend and brother, Dr. Corbin, giving an account of a most affecting and awful scene, which took place at the Brick Church in this County, on last Tuesday, the 29th of October. I offer no comment upon the painful intelligence, but request you insert it in the Religious Herald, Yours Most truly; E. S. Amory.

Laneville, Warwick
October 29, 1844.

Rev. & Dear Bro. Amory, -

This morning at an early hour I left home to attend a religious discussion at the Brick Church in York County, called Grafton, between Rev. James B. L. Williams of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the Rev. John Curtis of the Reformed Baptist Church. I arrived at the church between ten and eleven o'clock, and had been there but a few moments before both of the Rev. gentlemen applied to me to act as moderator. To their united request I made some objections, founded on my feeble state of health, and want of acquaintance with the rules there. However, I waived, and called the congregation to order by reading slowly and audibly the 7th chapter of Mathew. This done, I read and assisted in singing a hymn from the Reformed Baptist collection, breathing affectionate strains of love, and then offered

up a prayer to the throne of grace, imploring grace, love, union and peace to abide among us, and the necessity we felt of humility and contrition of heart. After this the Rev. Mr. Curtis handed me the paper with the following articles in debate, signed by both parties, which I here beg leave to insert:

'We, James B. L. Williams, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and John Curtis, Elder of Grafton Church, do agree to meet at Grafton, on Tuesday morning, October 29th, at 9 o'clock and discuss some questions of difference between us, in relation to faith, repentance and baptism as constituting the Christian.

Questions for discussion:

Faith, Repentance and Baptism necessary to constitute a Christian. Jno. Curtis affirms, Mr. Williams denies.

The heart of man is changed by the spirit of God itself, Mr. Williams affirms, John Curtis denies.

The Rev. Mr. Curtis led off in a neat strain of prefatory remarks, observing that the subject^s he was about to bring to the notice of the hearers were of more importance, a thousand times than all the political questions now before the country -- that all other subjects were as nothing in comparison to the great and momentous subjects connected with man's salvation. He then quoted from Micah and the other prophets and got fully into the subject of faith. Just this stage of his remarks, he placed his hand on his stomach, and observed he felt very unwell, and feared he should be unable to proceed with the discussion. He, however, got through the subject of faith, and was entering into repentance, when he again stated he felt sick, and wished some of the doctors would do something for him. Whereupon, Dr. F. W. Power, and his amiable and beloved wife, rushed into the pulpit, and administered some preparation of mint. Seeing he was a little revived, and Dr. Power leaving the stand, I suggested it was a case of Syncope, and proposed the administration of diffusible

P. 17 stimulant; nothing being so readily at hand as the spirits of lavender, it was freely given; his crevat was removed, his collar taken off, his vest opened and he vomited once freely; we then threw up the large window of the church near the pulpit, removed him to get the benefit of the cool air, and his pulse, which was all the time hobbling, became more regular, his eyes wandered, and he alternately drew up first one leg and then the other. At this time I suggested the use of ether, and Dr. Power went in all speed to his office and brought it. We poured some all in vain. We had endeavored to get him to take a camphor pill, but he

could not. In a few minutes his eyes became fixed, and in apparent ease his manly spirit fled, we trust and believe, to the bosom of his gracious Redeemer.

Here I might close this heart-rending letter, but alas, a more painful duty still presses upon me; to carry your mind to the fact, that his beloved and delicate wife, daughter and son, were present, and saw the distressing events as they severally occurred; and his dear flock, what a sad picture for them, whose swimming eyes told how keenly their hearts were affected. It was manly on that occasion to weep, and I found comfort in giving vent to a flood of tears; and here too I must refer to my Revd. Friend, Mr. Williams, whose fine feelings were severely stung. The last words that I heard from my departed friend were spoken as an appeal to me as moderator to "Notice the watch!" showing that he wished to be just as to time with his opponent. Thus my Revd. Brother, I have given you a faithful narrative of this heart-rending circumstance, and will you not join me in the exclamation, great is the mystery of Godliness. May a common Father who sees all and hears all, make us more humble and more wise, that, we may consider our days are numbered, and teach us what shadows we are and what shadows we pursue.

Yours in hope of everlasting rest, G. Lane Corbin. M.D.
To Revd. Edward S. Amory, Pastor of Denbigh Church, Warwick Co.

Perhaps he also wrote
"The Cat Out of the Bag"
attack on Peter Ainslie.
Writer is referred to
as "Doctor Corbin" on pp 3411
of that pamphlet.

The editor of the "Richmond Christian Advocate" will insert the same in his Periodical." (Religious Herald, Nov. 14, 1844; p. 3).

This painful and tragic scene occurred in the brick building that was erected for the Grafton Christian Church, and is still being used by them in 1932. It is located just across the road from the building that housed the Grafton Baptist Church for so many years, and was retained by the majority of the members when the division took place in 1832.

The subject of this distressing episode, Elder John Curtis, was converted under the preaching of Elder Peter Ainslie, and this interesting account of the meeting during which it took place is found in Frederick Arthur Hodges' The Plea and the Pioneers in Va., page 217:

"In July 1827, Elder Peter Ainslie began a protracted meeting at Grafton Church. People came from far and near to hear the word of life. The whole church continued in prayer, praise and thanksgiving. Those who had left their first love returned, and all the members were alive to their opportunities. The immediate results of the meeting were the confession and baptism of fifty-two willing souls, Bro. Curtis being one of the number."

"In 1829 he was made a deacon, and in 1830 was ordained a minister of the Gospel."

"He was gifted in polemics, and in the course of his latter years held two debates upon religious subjects. In the first of these he gained much for the cause of truth. In the midst of the last debate he passed from this world. He had long been a sufferer from heart disease, especially if he exerted himself. On this account many of his friends were opposed to his engaging in the debate; but the advocacy of the truth was dearer to him than life and health. He commenced his first speech in this debate in Grafton pulpit, and after speaking a short time stopped, took his seat, and in a few minutes breathed his last. This took place on the 29th of October, 1844."

Note

Ten years before his death,
John Curtis gave the land on
which Grafton Christian Church
was built.

Millennial Harbinger

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vast, with but few laborers; yet the good cause is onward, and, considering the amount of labor, is gaining ground rapidly. "Three years since, when I first landed here, there were only some five or six brethren in a scope of some 100 miles. Now we have several good organizations, and 150 or 200 members mustered in the good service of our King; and we have now three evangelists decently supported."

VIRGINIA.—Bro. F. M. Power, of Yorktown, under date of March 24th, reports some 12 or 15 additions, with a good prospect for more. He says, "I am truly pleased to inform you, that the cause of our Master in this section is onward and upward, despite of the influence of adverse circumstances. We have recently been visited by our beloved Bro. Silas Shelburne, A. N. M'Cheeney, Abel and Hunter, and truly has the Lord blessed their efforts. There is a greater interest now manifested than has been for a long time before. Our evangelists for the last year, Bro. R. Y. Henley, Henry T. M'Kenney and A. B. Walthall, did noble work in building up the cause in this immediate vicinity; and last, though not least, our beloved Bro. S. Shelburne. The disciples have been strengthened, and comforted, and built up in their most holy faith. Sinners have had the gospel faithfully and powerfully preached unto them, and doubtless the seed which has been sown will in time yield a rich harvest."

1852
Report
on
Work
at
Grafton

SACRED

to the Memory of

LUCY A. SMITH

Wife of

Matthew B. Smith,

Died Dec. 25th 1853

Aged 22 years.

A zealous member of the reformed Baptist
Church.

Inscription on gravestone in cemetery of
Grafton Christian Church indicating that
the church was called "reformed Baptist"
as late as 20 years after its founding.

Alexander Campbell (1788-1866), one of the founders of the Christian Church, may have visited Grafton on more than one occasion, but we can be certain that he made a visit in December, 1855, as part of a trip to Eastern Virginia summarized in Memoirs of Alexander Campbell, the lengthy biography written by his close friend, Robert Richardson.

622 MEMOIRS OF ALEXANDER CAMPBELL

(1855)

In the fall of this year, accompanied by Mrs. Campbell, he was induced to make another tour through Eastern Virginia, where some overtures were made for the endowment of a chair in the college. At Richmond he was happy to meet most of his old Virginia fellow-laborers, and to hear interesting addresses from Brother S. E. Shepherd, of New York. He delivered a discourse himself on the Lord's day, and an address on education on Monday, preaching again on Tuesday evening. At Charlottesville he enjoyed the hospitality

of the esteemed laborer, A. B. Walthall, and spoke several times, as did also Dr. Bullard, who accompanied him. Visiting Gordonsville, he heard an excellent discourse there from Brother Walthall, and went on to Louisa C. H., where he addressed the people; and after filling other appointments at Mangohick and Smyrna, he spoke also at Rappahannock and Acquia. Visiting afterward Yorktown and Williamsburg, he returned to Richmond, where he addressed at the Athenæum a literary society on the "True Basis of Moral Science." After a trip to Caroline, he returned again to Richmond and delivered an address before the Young Men's Christian Association. Everywhere he was received with marked attention and treated with great kindness by all parties. Dr. Burroughs and Dr. Jeter called upon him, as also Drs. Ryland and Gwathney, and they had pleasant interviews. Through the liberality of the brethren and the appeals of R. L. Coleman, who accompanied him during the greater part of his journey, a considerable amount was raised for Bethany College. At Washington, on his way home, he met with the amiable J. T. Barclay, who, having returned from Jerusalem, was at this time preparing for the press his interesting work, "The City of the Great King." After preaching in Washington, Mr. Campbell spoke also at Baltimore, where he spent a pleasant evening with the Rev. J. H. Stockton, for whom he had a high regard, and then setting out on the cars on the 31st of January, reached home safely after an absence of forty-eight days.



Alexander Campbell

Although Richardson's account merely mentions Yorktown, Alexander Campbell himself described the visit to the area in some detail in the Millennial Harbinger, the journal which he published.

TOUR TO EASTERN VIRGINIA.

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NOTES ON A TOUR TO EASTERN VIRGINIA.

No. III.

On the 7th of December, rising before the morning star had lost its radiance in the risen day, we hastened to get on board the steamer *Mataponi*, destined to carry its passengers down the York river to the old and venerable Yorktown. We were accompanied to the river by Bro. Henley, with whom we had sojourned, and by Prof. Hooks, and other friends. Accompanied by my grand-daughter, Caroline Henley, we arrived at Yorktown about 12 o'clock.

On our landing, we were met by Bro. Dr. Frederick Powers, with carriages, to carry us to our appointment at the Grafton church, some six miles from the river. We safely arrived there between one and

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TOUR TO EASTERN VIRGINIA.

two o'clock, a distance of some 70 miles from Bro. Henley's, whence we had taken our departure.

As we passed from Yorktown to the Grafton meeting-house, we could not but gaze, with intense interest, on the old battle-field, on which the destiny of our country, and its present and prospective millions seemed to be suspended. Two or three decaying Lombardy poplars yet stand upon the ground, indicating the memorable spot where Britain's army, commanded by Cornwallis, surrendered to the hero of the Revolution. Strange to me, it appeared, that no more magnificent or enduring monument should perpetuate the triumph of that decisive victory, and mark the spot where the British lion crouched to the American eagle.

We addressed a waiting audience on Paul's letter to Titus—on the salvation bringing grace of God, and its influences and effects. After the meeting, we dined with our brother, Dr. Robert Powers, who lives a short distance from the Grafton meeting-house. On the next day, we enjoyed the Christian hospitalities of Bro. Dr. Frederick Powers, at Yorktown. These brethren, with their excellent wives, are earnest and efficient members of the church. Their parents, now no more on earth, were models of piety and Christian excellency. Here, too, we met with their sister, the widow of my son in the faith, the much beloved and esteemed Henry M'Kenney—a graduate of Belknap College, and a devoted laborer in the Lord's vineyard. But the Master, at an early period, called him to a higher sphere.

At Yorktown, after dining with Dr. Powers, in one of the venerable edifices built more than a century since, by the English, before the Revolution, and of materials imported from British soil, now undergoing repairs, Mrs. Campbell, a native of that soil, was disposed to inspect the massive materials of which it was composed. On inspection, it would appear to have been so constructed of brick and mortar and wood, as if to successfully contend against centuries and all their wasting influences. This, indeed, is one of the characteristics of that great and mighty people. It is, too, probably one of the legitimate results of its system of entail, which ever looks down the vista of coming time, with a special regard to the interest and honor of posterity. In our migratory spirit, there lurks the idea that one or two generations settle the whole account of American heraldry and family aristocracy. There is, however, in human nature as now developed, especially under our social institutions, a restlessness and spirit of adventure that impair this feudal spirit, take away all sanctity from the old manor, and set us all adrift in quest of new localities and new adventures.

At Grafton, I should have noted, that Bro. Coleman was not on-

mindful of Bethany College, but, as his manner was, pressed its claims upon the attention and liberality of the brethren. Like myself, he is by no means a distinguished solicitor. He seems as if much more disposed to give than to ask; nay, to give rather than to receive. Some two or three brethren gave their fifty dollars, while those of larger means fell short of that mark. It is not always that men prefer "the rule of three direct" in giving. They have, in such cases, more respect for "the rule of three inverse." It is a common fact, that when God gives much, men give less; and where God gives less, men give more, proportionally. The great Teacher gave one memorable lesson on this mysterious fact. A widow's mite is sometimes more than another person's hundred pounds.

We had the pleasure of meeting at Grafton, our very energetic brother Carey, from Hampton, formerly a teacher at Bethany College; who, besides his very pressing invitation to visit Hampton, gave his hundred dollars to the Endowment Fund of the Virginia Chair in Bethany College. We regretted as much as he could regret, that our previous arrangements prevented our yielding to his so earnest importunities. We very much desired to see our sister Carey, of whose devotion, zeal, and energy in her profession, we had long since the most satisfactory proof; and also to have seen his flourishing school, composed of the youth of both sexes. But our purposed visit to the city of Williamsburgh, and especially our appointment for the 9th at Olive Branch; and, superadded to all this, sister Winn's carriage and horses, kindly sent from Williamsburgh, waiting to convey us to her residence, prevented us the pleasure of visiting Hampton.

At the close of that day, we found ourselves quite at home in the hospitable mansion of sister Winn, in the old capital of the Old Dominion.

On Lord's day morning the 9th, we proceeded from Williamsburgh to the Olive Branch church, some eight or nine miles from the city. The day was inclement—murky and wet, the first we had seen on our tour; and consequently, we had a more select auditory. Our address was heard with evident interest and attention. Bro. Coleman presided at the Lord's table, and ministered to our comfort. From the church we went to dine with our much esteemed brother, Elder Whitaker, who is still zealous and indefatigable in his profession—in his work of faith and labors of love. His son, a graduate of Bethany College, of elevated views and character, accompanied us while in that vicinity, and bids fair to be a worthy representative of a worthy father. In the evening, we much enjoyed the Christian hospitality of our highly appreciated brother, Richard Henley.

Alexander Campbell, a founder of the religious movement which today has branches known as the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Christian Churches, and Churches of Christ, is remembered as being an able debater and a powerful preacher. He briefly entered politics, winning election to the convention in 1829-30 to rewrite the state constitution of Virginia. (The home he built at Bethany in the Allegheny foothills was in the state of Virginia until 1863 [just three years before his death], when the state of West Virginia was formed.)

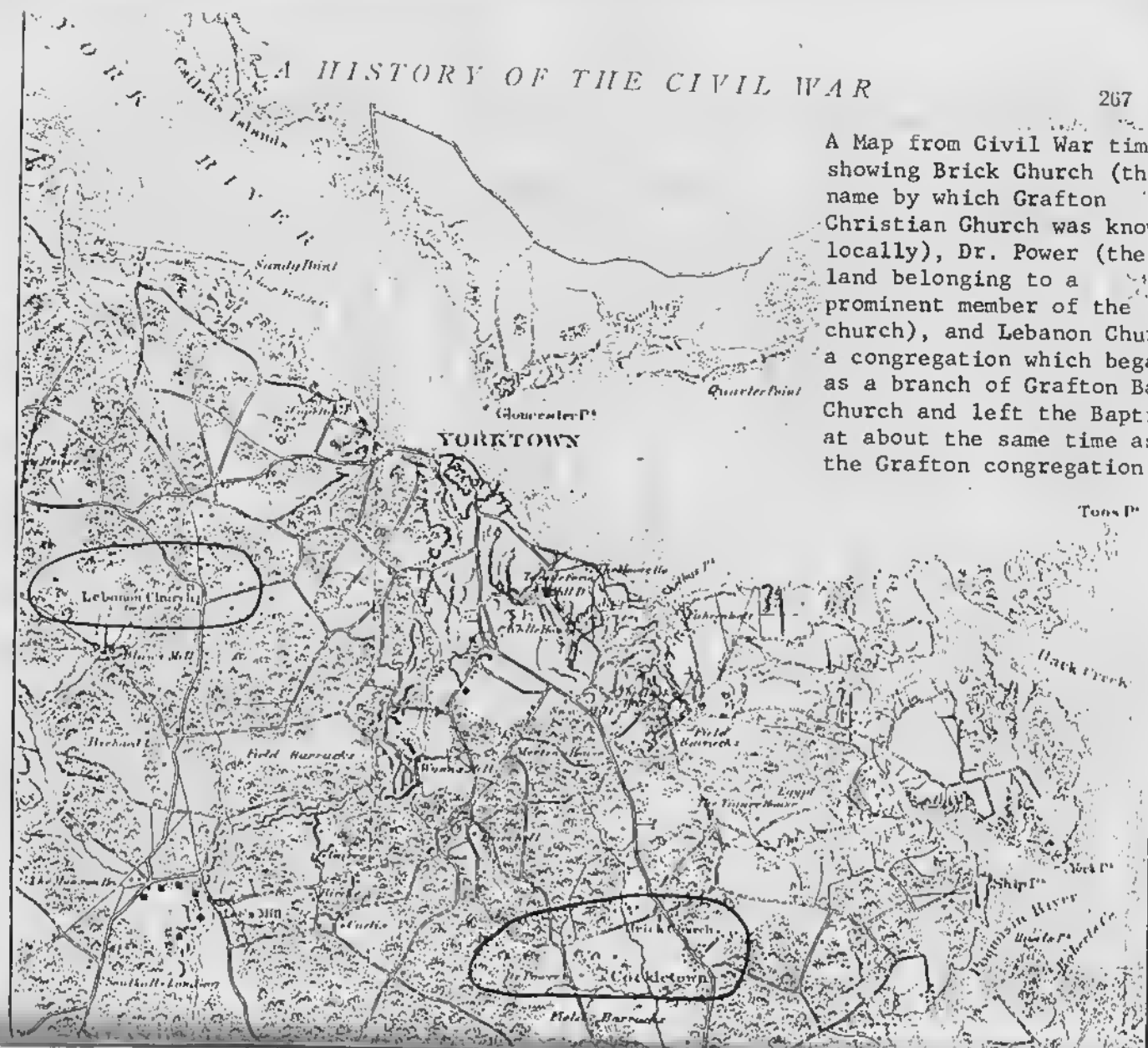
While in Richmond at the convention, he preached every Sunday. Former U. S. President James Madison, also a delegate to the convention, is quoted in Richardson's Memoirs of Alexander Campbell as praising Campbell's work in the convention and then saying, "But it is as a theologian that Mr. Campbell must be known. It was my pleasure to hear him very often as a preacher of the gospel, and I regard him as the ablest and most original expounder of the Scriptures I have ever heard."

On the pages of the Millennial Harbinger following the one shown opposite, Campbell told in detail about his visit to Williamsburgh (as he spelled it), stating, "We had been much solicited to visit this old city, once the grand theatre of the old fashioned aristocracy of the Old Dominion. It was, rather unfortunately, the commencement of the session of the Circuit Court. Our old friend, Judge Clopton, a co-laborer in the Virginia State Convention in 1829 and 1830, was presiding Judge. He courteously adjourned court for the accommodation of the citizens in general [presumably so they could hear Campbell speak]."

Mr. Campbell then described preaching in the "old Colonial Powder Magazine, now fitted up for a Baptist Meeting-house;—I have forgotten whether as hexagon or an octagon, more probably the former. It has, however, been well pewed and consecrated into a meeting-house, now-a-days called a church." He went on to tell that this was the only Baptist church east of the mountains in Virginia that invited him to use its pulpit or its meeting-house.

"Bro. Coleman" who was with Campbell in the meetings at Grafton and Olive Branch was R. Lindsay Coleman, an influential evangelist among the eastern Virginia churches. "Our very energetic brother Carey, from Hampton," was John B. Cary, who had been baptized at Grafton and later founded the Virginia Christian Missionary Society. [Names are not always spelled correctly -- Mr. Campbell added an "s" to Power.]

A Map from Civil War times showing Brick Church (the name by which Grafton Christian Church was known locally), Dr. Power (the land belonging to a prominent member of the church), and Lebanon Church, a congregation which began as a branch of Grafton Baptist Church and left the Baptists at about the same time as the Grafton congregation.



"GRAFTON" AS THE NAME FOR THE COMMUNITY

The area in which Grafton Christian Church is located is shown on maps of the Civil War era as "Cockletown." While it is not known exactly when the community took the name Grafton, it is known that sometime in the late 1800's Mr. W. T. Wainwright, who was post master in the community, and Dr. Robert H. Power, an elder of the Grafton congregation and a state senator, as well as a physician, decided to change the name of the post office to Grafton. It is very common for a church to take the name of a community, but it is unusual for a community to be named after a church.

mostly citizens. Many very interesting incidents that usually take place at such meetings, I would like to narrate, but time forbids. The church was much enlivened and encouraged, and now, with a good pastor, may be a source of great usefulness at their latitude. May heaven bless them and make them a blessing to all around them. To God be all the praise for his goodness to the children of men.—In the one hope,

J. B. CRANE.

MY DEAR BRO. PANDLTON:—Closed a meeting at Stony Point last Lord's day, 17th May, with 14 confessions, some reclaimed from their wanderings, some united from the Baptists, (unsolicited on our part,) and the church resuscitated and reorganized. Unfortunately, here, as well as in other places, it had become very much demoralized, as some of the baneful fruits gathered from the late deadly tree of war. May they all by the grace of God, live worthy of their high vocation, and finally ascribe the glory to Him. Among the 14 confessions, were three grandchildren of my old friends and acquaintances, brother and sister Bramham, now with you. The Lord remember and bless them, yourself and all others who love and serve the Redeemer.

CINCINNATI, May 23rd.

G. W. ABALL.

I am holding a meeting at Grafton, on the road from York to Big Bethel and Hampton. 22 have been added up to this time, mostly young men. A young men's prayer meeting has been established and the church in its Sunday school, Bible class, &c., is I think put in working order. I am just recovering from my distressing cold and hoarseness. Thus I am trying not to be utterly disgraced in the great field, and am hoping for mercy in the death hour, despite all my failings.

C. B.

GRAFTON, York co., Va., June 2, 1868.

OBITUARIES.

DEAR BRO. PANDLTON:—Your old subscriber and constant reader, Sister Hester Ewing, has gone to her reward. Her gentle spirit took its flight on the 2nd of April, 1868.

Many good and noble lives are not eventful. Thousands of God's children have gone down to graves marked only by affection, having apparently lived without having produced any effect upon the world either for good or evil.—Yet their histories are written in the book of God's remembrance, and prepared to be read before the assembled universe.

Elder Humphrey H. Wynne.

The Church in Virginia is again called to mourn the departure of one of her wisest and most useful men. This has seemed a fateful year. Never in the memory of the oldest inhabitant has death seemed so rife as in these winter months. There have been times of extraordinary and wide-spread mortality in particular countries and communities from famine, pestilence, or war, but never has there seemed so universal an increase in the death rate. In cities and in rural districts, among aged and young, in the circles of the great and the homes of the humble, the messenger that comes with equal foot to the palace and to the cot has been making

his way.



But death is always with us. He has ten thousand general orders to make their exits, and we must be ready. To

Church must suffer, as well as the State; the servant of God must yield to the summons, as well as the lover of this world. Manning and Spurgeon, Tribble and Linnam and Gilbert, must be gathered to their fathers, as well as the heir to the throne and the peasant in his hut.

Gathered as a ripe sheaf the good man of whom I write went home. For a year past he has been a great sufferer, and willingly entered into his rest. Born October 31, 1814, he has been blessed with a long life. His parents were H. H. and Elizabeth Wynne. His ancestor, Sir Thomas Wynne, was one of the earliest settlers of Virginia, having obtained a large grant of land in York and Warwick counties in return for his loyalty to the crown. The family was of Welsh extraction.

Our brother was graduated with honors from William and Mary College in its best days, and was a man of fine intellectual culture and gifts. He was baptized by James Henshall, and united with Grafton church, York county, and at once began to be active in Christian service. He was chosen an elder of the congregation, and served faithfully in that office for about fifty years. He superintended the Sunday-school, preached to the people, attended funerals, visited the sick, admonished the careless, and ministered in the innumerable ways open to a country elder with the utmost cheerfulness and acceptance throughout half a century. For his work and labor of love he was universally beloved and respected, and his influence for good was felt far and wide.

In May, 1837, he was married to Miss Diana Minson, and the

Page from the June, 1868,
Millennial Harbinger con-
taining a communication
from Chester Bullard (C.B.),
noted evangelist, about
his visit to Grafton.

fruit of this union was one son—Thomas Humphrey—who was a captain in the Thirty-second Virginia regiment, and was killed at Antietam September 17, 1862. December 25, 1848, he married Miss Mary E. C. Wynne, and a few weeks before his son Thomas was killed in battle a son was born to them—William H.—who lived to manhood, and died of consumption January 22, 1888. These afflictions were heavy and almost crushing in their influence upon our brother and his devoted wife, but they were borne with exemplary meekness and resignation. No man ever more beautifully illustrated in his every-day practice the precepts of the gospel he preached. He was always patient and hopeful, and his faith sustained him in every trial. He carried the church steadfastly upon his heart, and had a personal solicitude for every member, and especially for the lambs and the weak ones of the fold; but he saw always the bright side of things, and his whole life was full of cheer and encouragement, of gentleness and helpfulness.

Brother Wynne was thoroughly acquainted with the Scriptures, and an excellent preacher. He studied carefully his talks to the church, and, while somewhat slow and halting in his delivery, he fed the flock on the pure milk of the Word. The church was kept in sympathy with all the great movements of the brotherhood and her people trained in the highest conceptions of piety and truth. He was always in his place. Even when disease was slowly sapping his strength he would come to the Lord's house, and when he could stand no longer would sit in his chair

and teach the people. The children loved him, and the young people felt that in him they had a friend. He was always forthcoming with those that erred, and unceasing in his efforts for the peace and prosperity of the church. To the ministry he was one of the most loving helpers. He baptized the writer, and was ever generous and kind to him in his work when pastor of Grafton in the beginning of his ministry, and through all the years that have come since then. Young preachers have special reasons to remember him gratefully.

January 20th he passed away. For the change he was abundantly prepared, and looked forward to it with a cheerful spirit. He felt that it meant for him home and rest. He had loved to sing: "I Am Waiting for the Morning" and its dawn was most welcome. February 2d we buried his body in the churchyard at Grafton near the spot where for so many years he had stood to proclaim the gospel. From far and near the people of all the churches gathered to do him honor. W. C. Wade and the writer conducted the service, and many were the evidences of the warm affection and esteem in which our brother was held by those among whom he spent his long and useful life. He will continue to live in the hearts of scores and hundreds who have felt his influence, and his benediction. Happy, glorious rest. Welcome to the Father's house many whose feet he was instrumental in turning into the ways of righteousness.

F. D. POWER.

Humphrey H. Wynne died in 1892. This obituary appeared in a Christian Church publication.

Frederick D. Power (1851-1911), who grew up in York County, told of his affection for Grafton Christian Church in two lengthy letters he wrote for the brotherhood paper, the CHRISTIAN STANDARD. Power was minister of Vermont Avenue Christian Church in Washington, D. C., from 1875 until his death in 1911. During the time that James A. Garfield was in Washington as a United States Congressman and then as President, he worshiped with this congregation. William E. Tucker and Lester G. McAllister, in their history of the Disciples, Journey in Faith, relate that the presidential coachman thought it "undignified for the President of the United States to stop before such an undistinguished edifice" as the small frame building of the Vermont Avenue Christian Church. "It was said that during the services the driver waited with his carriage before a more imposing church near by" (p. 355).

In 1880, the year Garfield was elected President, Frederick Power had "proposed a new building to the general convention . . . and with brotherhood support erected a new structure which was dedicated in 1884," three years after the death of Garfield, who had been shot by a disappointed office-seeker on July 2, 1881, and died the following September 19. The Vermont Avenue congregation eventually came to be housed in the imposing structure at Thomas Circle in Washington known as National City Christian Church (dedicated in 1930).

The two letters written by Power contain much very interesting material about the history of Grafton Christian Church. There is some repetition in the 1902 letter of material written in 1892, but there is considerable new material as well. It should be noted that the listing of church members as "White males," "white females," "male," and "female free persons of color," "male" and "female servants," and the recording of slaves as "belonging to Smith or Jones as the case may be" refers to the records of the early Grafton Baptist Church, not Grafton Christian Church.

WASHINGTON LETTER.

My annual sermons at Grafton Church, down among the pines of Eastern Virginia, have just been preached. Once a year, as sacredly as the Mohammedan to Mecca or the Jew to Jerusalem, I make a pilgrimage to this church. For twenty years one Sunday in every fifty-two has been thus specially set apart. Here for three generations my people have worshipped; here, November 16, 1866, I was baptized; here I preached my first sermon in response to the old elder's introduction: "Our young brother will now give us an exhortation"; and here I had my first pastorate. This is the only apology for the somewhat personal character of my narrative, and the sufficient reason why this history should have a deeper interest, for the writer at least, than any account of Old Church Church or even St. Peter's or the Mosque of Omar.

Grafton was originally a Baptist church, constituted about 1810. Its records kept by the "Tithers" are very complete and curious. Every "Conference" and communion the painstaking scribe has faithfully kept for posterity. There are four rolls of members divided, as follows: "White males," "white females," "male" and "female free persons of color," "male" and "female servants." The colored people are recorded with a single name, as "Cato," "Sam," "Moses," "Cyrus," "Sally," "Violet," "Cloe," "Minnie," "Patience," "Minah," "Free Fanny," "Free Milly," and listed as be-

hreshmen did not depart with that peace and brotherly kindness that should have been." Record is made, May 5, 1827, of the fact that "Pat Mill qualified on the holy Evangelists of Almighty God that he never said that Mr. Thomas Curtis ever took, stole, or carried away a hog or any other species of property," and that the author of the story was "base, and had no other intention than to slander Mr. Curtis and rebel against God"; also, that the church, "after serious and solemn deliberation, decided that a physician shall not be required to divulge anything connected with his medical profession of a private nature"; also, that the church "will not tolerate that species of birth called sell the tumbler." Application is made by "Bro. Billy, a man of color, to preach and to bury the dead of his color," and the church authorizes him to do so, with the restriction "that he will not suffer any of his brethren of color to see any ardent spirits at his meetings, if it is known to him." January, 1831, the following remarkable facts are set forth: "On complaint of Bro. George, colored, relative to his wife's treatment, refusing to be a dutiful wife and withdrawing herself from him, the church thought it not incumbent upon George to remain with her, but, on the contrary, that it would not be departing from order to get another wife. And then the brethren departed in peace." April 17, 1830, the church unanimously resolved to expunge from its records everything relating to church government, acknowledging the New Testament as their only guide. The church was on the eve of revol-

ution, which, what at these times are continued by the indulgent kindness of a benevolent providence, no earthly tribunal shall shrink or restrain. Secondly, that we deny the committee spiritual direction or control of any man or set of men, and of maintaining the religious tracts set forth to the decrees of the Dover Association, but humbly hoping that we are striving aright for the great inheritance at a coming day, we are determined, taking the Scriptures for our guide, and Christ for our leader, as far as to us lies, to live in peace with all men, not quarrelling with or proscribing any or rendering railing for railing. Thirdly, that in the said decrees no act of moral turpitude is charged against the said excluded elders, the first of whom being our pastor, and well known to us, a man of great piety and usefulness, we can not without violence to our feelings and consciences shut our church against him or the other brethren with him excluded; therefore, fourthly, Resolved, that our confidence in Brother Alonzo is unshaken and our regard for him unimpaired, and that we shall always feel the most lively gratitude for labors whose extensive usefulness all have seen and felt. Resolved, fifthly and lastly, that we, the members of Grafton Church, feeling ourselves aggrieved by the assumption of power and privileges by the association which we have ever held dear and never delegated to any body of men, do hereby enter our most solemn protest against said report; that we further and particularly protest against the exclusion of our brother and pastor, Peter Alonzo, contained in their decree, and claim for ourselves the rights and privileges we have always enjoyed of examining into the conduct of our members and all other internal concerns of our body.

This little Declaration of Independence is signed by Allan Chapman, John Curtis, James Helvin, Samuel Sheld, Frederick B. Power, Thomas Minson, Kemp P. Elliott, Thomas Wynne, Thomas Hogg and others. The church divided, a small number withdrawing and organizing another Baptist church, the great body of the congregation of 400 members taking the position of Alex-

longing to either of lines as it also may be. The record is chiefly of "conferences," where brethren and sisters were summoned to answer for the offenses against discipline as "suffering dancing or lewdness in his house," "views carrying or false tales," "wishing to fight," "bawling," "gossiping," "marrying his wife contrary to her mother's consent," "various acts of immorality and dissipation," "retailing brandy open his establishment," "being in company with those engaged in the sale of what was called whisky, we will say dancing," "the sons of the colored brethren were brought before the church for stealing from their owners," "committing adultery," "riotous conduct," "drunkenness," "from the frequent charge of 'intemperance,' against both white and colored, it is plain that there was much drinking in the days. After these 'conferences' the record is generally, 'these brethren then administered the sacrament and departed with the appearance of harmony and peace.' Only one church quarrel is spread in the minutes, and here the

At this time the membership, white and colored, was over five hundred.

In the summer of 1832, the famous "Dover Decrees" were enacted by the Dover Baptist Association. Peter Alonzo, pastor of the Grafton Church, was one of the preachers placed under ban. This action was taken by the congregation:

The Baptist Church of Christ called Grafton, in York county, assembled in conference this third day of November, 1832, to take into consideration the proceedings of the 1831 Dover Association of Virginia, at which a preamble and resolutions in the form of decrees were adopted, having for their object the exclusion from that body for causes therein set forth of Elders Peter Alonzo, Thomas M. Henley, John Duvel, Melibow Webber, Dudley Atkinson, and John Richards; after duly considering the said preamble and resolutions by which it is declared that all churches suffering or permitting the said excluded elders or others espousing their religious views to preach or administer the ordinances for them, shall be likewise excluded from their fellowship; determined to pursue the following course of conduct, with the aid of the great Head of the Church, and accordingly came to the following conclusions: First, that whilst we deeply lament and deplore the divisions and schisms in the Baptist churches throughout our country, we feel proud and grateful to a wise and bountiful God that we are under a government of civil laws which guarantees to every individual perfect liberty of conscience which no power on earth shall trammel and secure to him the inalienable privilege of worshipping his Creator according to the dictates of

under Campbell. May 11, 1834, the church was formally organized. "Being determined not to submit to what among the Baptist churches were known and styled as the 'Dover Decrees,' having for their object the exclusion of all who read the publications of Alexander Campbell or went to hear those preach who favored the views taught by him" and "therefore being unwilling to submit to those decrees as a bond of union," they formed themselves into a separate church "with a view of keeping all the ordinances delivered by the apostles, declaring it to be their 'full purpose of soul' to acknowledge no other

articles of belief but the Old and New Testaments, and the latter as containing their faith and the rule of their behavior as Christians."

Now begins, fifty-seven years ago, the Church of Disciples of Christ at Grafton. The records are beautifully kept in clearest chirography, entries being made of all matters of importance to the congregation. All immersions, deaths, removals, appointment of committees, citation of members for breaches of discipline, etc., are carefully noted. For example:

1834, Aug. 2.—This day Sisters Mary Wynne and Lucy Moreland were immersed into the death of Christ and were by consent of the brethren received into the church.

1834, Dec. 21.—Brethren Theo. Wynne and James Rife were appointed a committee to wait on Bro. Blank and cite him to appear before the church on the next Lord's day to answer a charge of intemperance.

1834, Dec. 23.—Bro. Wynne reported that he had waited on Bro. Blank, who appeared, confessed the truth of the charge alleged, promised amendment, hoping he had repented and the church through their pastor having rebuked and admonished him, he was retained in fellowship.

1835, Aug. 16.—Sister Blank was publicly rebuked before the church for detraction.

1835, Dec. 23.—A protracted meeting commenced this day and was concluded on 30th, during which from the bible and prudently faithful ministrations of our beloved and prudently faithful ministrations of our beloved Brother Henshall, 21 were added to the congregation and were baptized forthwith.

1837, Nov. 25.—It was announced before the congregation that it having pleased the great Bishop of Events to take from us our much beloved and lamented Pastor, Bro. Kemp P. Elliott, on Thursday morning last, the 23rd inst., after a short indisposition, at which time he fell suddenly down whilst sitting on his chair reading; Bro. John Curtis propped, succeeded by Bro. Wynne, that the male members wear crepe on the left arm and the female dress their bonnets with black riband for three months as a testimony of the heartfelt sorrow and deep regret for his loss and as a memento of his distinguished worth.

1841, Feb. 21.—John B. Cary baptized.

1841, April 22.—Resolved that the words "Assistant Pastor" be expunged from the church book as unnecessary and that the word elder be substituted therefor.

The church had organized with Kemp P. Elliott as pastor, John Curtis, Wm. Table and Dr. E. B. Power, assistant pastors.

preachers from Thomas and Alexander Campbell down, have preached here; Henshall Coleman, I. T. Johnson, John Talbot, the Fergusons, W. K. Pendleton, Dr. Thomas, Short, Walsh, D. S. Burnett, Shielburne, Goss, Hunter, Parrieh, Sizer, McCassey, Deval, the Hucloys, Abell, Walshall, the Bullards, Alaslie, and all the younger generation of our ministry in Virginia. Grafton has ever been remarkable for the intelligence and piety of its people. From this church three parishes have gone forth to proclaim the glorious riches of Christ, and three churches—Newport News, Hampton and Olivet—acknowledge her as their mother church. Foremost has she ever been in liberality and every good work, and ever mindful of the great general interests of the brotherhood. On the records of the Washington Church I find Grafton credited with a generous gift for the building of a house of worship at the Capital forty years ago, and the calls for missionary and educational

needs have ever been met with willing response by this country congregation. The church has had its times of depression and prostration. During the war it was surrounded by battlefields. Within a few miles was fought the battle of Gettysburg, the first engagement between the North and

Southern armies, and near by are Yorktown and Williamsburg, whose history during those troublous times is well remembered. The house was used first as a hospital, and then as a picket-post and stable, and left a ruin, and for years there was no religious service held by her people. The members were impoverished, had moved away, or had been slain in battle. Gradually they built up the waste places of their Zion, began meetings in the midst of her decayed and ruined walls, with rude logs for seats, and many yielded to the gospel. The church is still doing good service, and can claim a membership of 150, the children of these fathers of whom I have written. H. H. Wynne and Dr. Robert H. Power, venerable and godly men, are elders emeriti, who still remain with the church, and Robert Wynne and William C. Wade minister in word and doctrine. R. H. Wynne served as pastor during the past year. The record of Grafton is a worthy one to go before the King, and her angels and dead and living saints make one glorious communion. Let us be thankful for such history.

E. D. Power.

1844, March 30.—It was unanimously resolved that the elders shall rule according to God's Word. That committees appointed and refusing to act shall be amenable to the congregation. That the contribution bring a separate act of worship it was more expedient that small boxes be passed through the brethren and sisters to receive said contribution.

1844, Oct. 23.—Our beloved brother, John Curtis, who has labored with us in word and doctrine for many years with untiring zeal and devotion, departed this life in Grafton meeting-house this day a few minutes before noon, he being there for the purpose of discussing some religious differences with Mr. Williams, a Methodist in a friendly and courteous manner, when he complained of pain, and after speaking about half an hour, gave way, and in a few minutes expired. Crise was worn for thirty days.

1857, Jan. 30.—It was resolved that on each First Day of the week the public worship shall commence precisely at 11 o'clock, and Olinus at one; that the presiding elder on the occasion shall call on brother to read a certain portion of Scripture in the New and Old Testaments; that a committee of three be appointed to wait on any member of the church who absents himself or herself from church three Lord's days in succession.

Committees were appointed at various times "to labor with" brethren and sisters who were guilty of such offenses as "intoxication," "profanity," "lying," "fornication," "cursing," "disorder," "fighting and insubordination," "dancing and other works of the flesh," "being engaged in a fight at a muster," "joining improperly in some parties," "being under the influence of ardent spirit," "to settle differences between brethren," etc. I am not sure, but these old-fashioned methods of discipline would be of great value to the churches in this day. Certain it is that this church of Grafton was a powerful and blessed influence in all the country round about, and its history has been that of a great and precious fountain of life and helpfulness to hundreds, and even thousands. All the



FREDERICK D. POWER, LL. D., WASHINGTON, D. C.

A GRAND CONCERT and RECITATION

FOR THE BENEFIT OF

WHEATON CHRISTIAN CHURCH,
Friday, November 17, 1893,

GIVEN BY

Capt. F. W. GUNNINGHAM and O. E. LOH-
MAN, the Sweet Singers of Richmond,
and Mr. B. F. TINSLEY, the
original Humorist.

The Programme will consist of Solos and Duets,
and Original Poetry, &c.

The occasion promises to be a rare treat. None
should miss it, you may never have another chance
to hear this sweet singing.

An Oyster Supper will also be Served after the Concert.

February 23, 1895. (21).

OBITUARIES.

[When obituary notices exceed eighty words and do not in length, one dollar is charged for every additional eighty words or fraction of eighty. When the inquiry is not sent with the obituary the editor will be at liberty to abridge at pleasure. To insure prompt attention send remittance with notice.]

GRICE.

Lilla Edith Grice, a grand-daughter of Mr. Charles M. Grice, of Wilmington, and a lovely child of two years of age, was laid to rest in our beautiful cemetery, January 15. All of her relatives have the sympathy of a large circle of friends in their great affliction. F. M. GRICE, WILMINGTON, O.

GRANOR.

Died, at her home in Monville, Fla., January 20, Miss Pearl Orange, aged 19 years and 10 days. Her protracted illness of several months was borne with wonderful patience and resignation. The death of this young sister is a felt loss to church activities and social life in this community. A. FLOWER.

SANDALS.

Mrs. Sarah Sandals died at her home in Wilmington, January 14, 1895, at the age of eighty years. She was one of the pioneers of Licking County, Ohio. Her religious life was largely spent with the United Brethren and Wesleyan Methodists. She was a good woman. She leaves two sons to mourn her loss. F. M. GRICE, WILMINGTON, O.

CONNER.

Bro. and Sister Wm. Conner, of Bartonville, have recently felt the ghost of a great shadow on their pleasant home in the death, January 17, 1895, of their only daughter, Nancy, a lovely girl of nine years. But the good heavenly Father will not leave them to sorrow without hope. F. M. GRICE.

WILMINGTON, O.

POWER.

At Glenbrook, York County, Va., on Thursday, January 21, 1895, in the forty-sixth year of his age, Dr. Robert Elmer Power, oldest son of Dr. Robert H. and Mrs. Annie M. Power.

A beloved physician, a noble man, a true Christian, he lived not to be ministered but to minister, and sacrificed his life for the good of others. F. D. POWER.

Pictured on the opposite page is C. E. Elmore, who preached at Grafton Christian Church around the turn of the century. Mrs. T. J. (Nancy) White, who, at 93, is the church's oldest living member, recalls him from her childhood as a "tall, thin man. People liked him very much."

"In those days," she says, "we didn't have a parsonage and had preaching just once a month. The preacher would come in on the train on Saturday and stay with members of the church. He would be taken to the train on Monday morning."

Mrs. White's brother, Ernest E. Amory, holds the longest continuous membership in Grafton Church. (Mrs. White was a member of Hampton Christian Church for a number of years.) Mr. Amory, who was born in 1901, was given the middle name of Elmore in honor of the tall, thin preacher.



At left is the obituary for Dr. Robert Elmer Power which appeared in the February 23, 1895 Christian Standard.



WASHINGTON LETTER.

After about ten years' absence I preached, Sunday, August 3, at Grafton Church, York Co., Va. This is down among the pines and rhododendron bushes of eastern Virginia, eighteen miles north of Newport News. Here, for three generations, my people have worshipped; here, Nov. 16, 1869, I was baptized; here I preached my first sermon in response to the old elder's introduction, "Our young brother will now give us an exhortation," and there I had my first pastorate. It is a little old brick structure, built among the old pines, where the road forks, just six miles south of historic Yorktown. Grafton is old, as things go in our country. It has its history, like old Christ Church and Trinity, New York City; St. Peter's, the Abney of Omar and Cologne Cathedral. It was originally constituted a Baptist church in 1809. Its records were kept by a "clerk," and its old church book for that period shows six rolls of members: "White males," "white females," "males," and "female free persons of color," and "male" and "female servants." The colored people are recorded as "Jato," "Sam," "Moses," "Cyrus," "Suckey," "Violet," "Chloe," "Phillips," "Linah," "Free Mily," "Free Penny," etc. Among the various offenses against discipline are "wasting time to fight," "betting," "gambling," "suffering dancing or juggling in his house," "marrying his wife contrary to her mother's consent," "retailing ardent spirits without a license," "practicing frauds upon his creditors," "being in company with those engaged in the ways that some call mischief, we will say dancing," "intemperance," etc. Names of the members in black were brought before the church for "stealing from their owners," "robbing stolen sheep," "riotous conduct," "drunkenness," etc. "Bro. Mily, a man of color," is mentioned "to preach and to bury the dead of his church," with the restriction that "he will not suffer any of his brethren of color to use ardent spirits at his meetings." January, 1831, the following remarkable facts are set forth: "In company with Bro. George, colored, relative to his wife's treatment, refusing to be a dutiful wife and withdrawing herself from him, the church thought it not incumbent upon George to remain with her, but, on the contrary, that it would not be departing from order to get another wife." While and black are dealt with, and almost impartially shown in the church discipline. "The nation is one of the things severely handled, and since publicly rebuked the deceiver. Records in the church book show that the story was true, and that no other intention than to standee Mr. Curtis and rebel against God." At the same meeting the church decided that it will not tolerate "that species of mischief called well theible."

April, 17, 1830, the church unanimously resolved to disengage from its record everything relating to church government, acknowledging the New Testament as their only guide. It was on the eve of revolution. Its membership at that time, white and colored, was over 500. In the summer of 1832 the famous Dover Heresy was raised. Peter Atwell, pastor of Grafton Church, being one of the preachers placed under the ban. That was the grandfather of the present Peter Atwell, then adopted the Declaration of Independence. It reads like Thomas Jefferson's immortal paper. It has the ring of a trumpet. It denies "the unlimited spiritual direction or control of any man or set of men, and expresses a determination to take the Scriptures for our guide and light for our leader, as far as in us lies, to live in peace with all men, not quarrelling with or disturbing any, or reading railing for railing." This instrument against "the assumption of power and privileges by the association which we have ever held dear, and never delegated to any man," is signed by Allan Chapman, Fred. Clark, H. Moore, John Curtis, James Betts, Samuel Shickel, Kemp P. Elliott, Thomas Wynne, Thomas Hogg, and others. The church divided, a small number withdrawing and organizing another Baptist church, now long since disappeared. The great body of over 400 taking the position of Alexander Campbell. This was May 11, 1834. The church was organized "with a view of keeping all the ordinances as delivered by the apostles," and declaring it to be their "full purpose and determination to acknowledge an leader, but Christ, no infallible teachers but the apostles and prophets, and no articles but the Old and New Testaments, and the latter as containing their faith and the rule of their behavior as Christians. Kemp P. Elliott was chosen pastor; John Curtis, William Tabb and Dr. Frederick B. Power, assistant pastors. Later the word "olier" was substituted.

From this time on the church was greatly blessed, and has proven itself a precious fountain of life and holiness to thousands. Alexander and Thomas Campbell preached here, Henschall, Coleman, John T. Johnson, Taff, the Fergussons, W. K. Fendleton, D. S. Barnett, Sheldons and Goss, Abel Wallhall, the Hopleys, Parfitt, the Bullards, and all the younger generation of preachers. John B. Cary was baptized here Feb. 21, 1841. Three churches, Newport News, Hampton and Olney, have sprung from it. Three preachers have gone forth to proclaim the

unsearchable riches of Christ. During the Civil War this country was bloodily fought over. Bethel, the first engagement between Northern and Southern armies, was only a few miles away, and Yorktown and Williamsburg were near at hand. It was a hospital and then a picket post and a stable and fell a ruin, and for years no religious service was held by her people. The members moved out of the way of advancing armies, were impoverished, were slain in battle. Gradually they built up her waste places, began meetings in the midst of her desecrated and ruined walls, strewed the ground with straw and used rude logs for seats, and it was at these meetings that the writer of this letter and many others obeyed the Gospel.

But pardon this long history. I left Washington Saturday evening, and early Sunday was driving over the familiar road to Stafton. It was a round trip from Newport News of thirty-six miles, and the sun was warm. The people were there from all quarters. It was an all-day meeting, with an ample dinner under the trees, and the choir from twenty miles around. The men and the women with whom I worshipped here have white marble headstones or sleep in unmarked graves under the pines, but their sons had daughters were there, and it was good once more to be among them. It is a very restful thing to get into a crowd where the little "Mr." and the pretensions and unmeaning "Dr." are no longer heard. It is a sweet music to the soul. In the afternoon I preached against a thunderstorm. It was cyclonic. Never before had I such a contest with the elements. Thunder roared and reverberated through the forest; lightnings flashed fiercely. The rain poured in torrents and floods. The wind was almost a hurricane force. Jupiter Tonans seemed to hold his sheaf of barbed lances right above our heads. Neck and neck the sea ran with the storm, and without a moment's disorder, or even apparent uneasiness among the women and children, we came to the conclusion of our service and our happy day together. But that was a country audience, down among the rhododendron bushes and the majestic pines.

Tidewater District Convention met at Hampton, August 5-7. There was a good attendance, and a happy and successful meeting. J. L. Hill presided. There were some of the Tidewater patriars present: Dr. H. H. and Mrs. Holly Walker, Capt. and Mrs. A. P. Hagby, Mrs. H. H. Wynne, W. F. Fox and wife, Judge G. T. Garnett, H. L. Ware, and others. The women had the first day, and were blessed in their meeting.

They contributed \$1200. Mrs. Tyler preached over this meeting, and Mrs. Cephas Shelburne made a strong address.

Two days were given to the general business and the addresses and reports. There are 4249 members in the churches of the district, and they raised for all work, \$28,320.24. The educational fund, which has been of special importance in the eyes of Tidewater disciples, amounts to \$25,000, and was increased about \$200 during the convention. The Sunday schools raised during the year, \$2,500.

Perhaps the most important action taken by the body was the merging of the district evangelist board with the State board. President Hill, who has served long and faithfully, declined a reelection, and H. H. Atkins was chosen in his place.

The colleges were well represented. Philip Johnson speaking for Bethany, C. P. Williamson for Richmond Female College, and Daniel E. Motley for Washington. Allan Wilson, H. C. Garrison and D. E. Motley delivered addresses during the convention. Among the preachers not already mentioned were W. G. Barker, S. T. Sutton, H. H. Moore, P. C. Cuyr, Albert Luxton, W. P. Smith, P. P. Mival, A. J. Hensforth, I. L. Christoul, J. H. Hurnough, F. W. Troy, Jr., and Herbert Yenell. Bro. Yenell has been operating an evangelist in this district, and just closed a meeting at Newport News for the Second Church, with 100 additions.

The Hampton Church, under the care of A. J. Hensforth, is making fine progress. They entered the convention most hospitably. This church was founded by the Tennils and Wade families from old Grafton, and it is necessarily built of the right material. The convention was styled "the bridal convention." One of the preachers was present on his bridal trip without his bride; another was prepared to take his bride at the convention; one or two others were on the lookout for brides; and a host of brethren, brighter than these dominions, were married and brought their brides along. The meeting was a success from this point of view.

One of our best young Christians entered into her rest, Friday, August 1—Florence Chapman, sister of Andrew F. Chapman, pastor at Little Mount. She was a granddaughters of Alexander Campbell, and came to us from the historic Dutch Fork Church. A pure and faithful soul as ever served our Lord, she has fulfilled her mission, and rests from her labors. A. L. Chapman came on to the last service. The Vermont Avenue Church has many treasures among the heavenly host.

J. H. Hagby is at his post every Sunday. Ira W. Kinney is not only serving his people, but has been holding a bush meeting in Maryland.

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MAR
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near by. B. F. Sapp is contending with the summer slump in a faithful fashion.

Who shall say that both pastors and churches are not responsible for much of the religious indifference under the reign of the dogstar? When we close our churches at night do we not, virtually say, "It is just as well to take things easy for the summer," and so cultivate the spirit of self-indulgence and neglect of the sanctuary? It is remarkable how the spirit of man is the same from age to age. Read old Hugh Latimer's sermon on "The Ploughers." I have just gone over it for the twentieth time. It was spoken 350 years ago, but it is strictly up to date. Hear him: "And now I would ask a strange question. Who is the most diligent bishop and prelate in all England, that passeth all the rest in doing his office? I can tell, for I know him; who it is I know him well. There is one that passeth all the others and is the most diligent prelate and preacher in all England. And will ye know who it is? I will tell you. It is the devil. He is the most diligent preacher of all others; he is never out of his diocese; he is pater from his cure; ye shall never find him unemployed; he is ever in his parish; he keepeth residence at all times; ye shall never find him out of the way; call for him when ye will, he is ever at home; the diligentest preacher in all the realm, he is ever at his plow; nor lording nor lolling can hinder him; he is ever applying his business; ye shall never find him idle, I warrant you.

Sicut leo raptens circuit querens quem devoret. He goeth about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. I would have this text well viewed and examined, every word of it. *Circuit,* he goeth about in every corner of his diocese. He goeth on visitation daily. He leaveth no place of his cure unvisited. He walketh round about from place to place, and ceaseth not. *Sicut*

leo, as a lion, is strong, he goeth about proudly, straightly and fiercely, with high looks, with his proud countenances, with his stately bragging. *Raptens,* roaring; for he letteth not slip any occasion to speak or to roar out when he seeth his time. *Querens,* he goeth about seeking, and not sleeping as our bishops do, but he seeketh diligently, he searcheth diligently all corners, whereas he may have his prey; he roveteth abroad in every place of his diocese, he standeth not still, he is never at rest, but ever to hand with his plow that it may go forward. But there was never such a preacher in England as he is."

To-day nearly every Washington pastor is out of town. Many of the leading men are away for three months. Think of a business man giving up his work one-fourth of the year! A man just called to be married, mopping his face in desperation, having sought for ten different pastors without finding one. It is time the shepherds were considering the claims of the sheep upon them in the warm season. They need both water and pasture as well in August as in December.

WASHINGTON, D. C.

P. D. POWER.

STATE OF OHIO, CITY OF TOLEDO, }
LUCAS COUNTY, }

FRANK J. CHENEY makes oath that he is the senior partner of the firm of F. J. CHENEY & Co., doing business in the City of Toledo, County and State aforesaid, and that said firm will pay the sum of ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS for each and every case of Catarrh that can not be cured by the use of HALL'S CATARRH CURE.

FRANK J. CHENEY.



Our cover photograph shows the original building, which was erected in 1834, with A. J. Renforth (1875-1945) standing in front. The picture was taken in the early 1900's, around the time Mr. Renforth began preaching at Grafton.

At a church meeting held
Dec 2nd, 1907. Scripture read
by Bro J. C. Wynn and prayer
It is agreed that Bro. A. J. Renfort
will preach two Sundays in
next month commencing from
1st Jan, 1908 and it is further
voted that Bro Renfort's salary
shall be \$300 a year.
Bro G. J. Curtis, J. G. Thomas and
selected deacons
Done

Unfinished minutes of a
church meeting.

Grafton Christian Church
GRAFTON, VA.
FOR CURRENT EXPENSES

Monthly Payments \$ _____

Name _____

Date _____ 191 _____

Please return this to the Treasurer of the Church
on or before the Second Sunday in each month.

OFFERING ENVELOPE USED

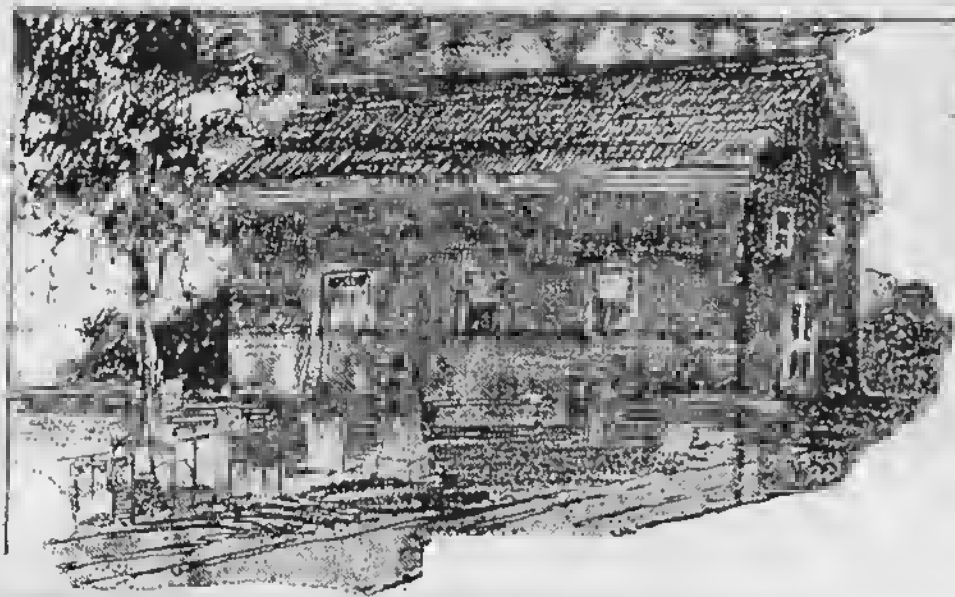
BETWEEN 1910 and 1920

(Found among papers that belonged to

Mrs. Howard R. Burcher)

DAILY PRESS. NEWPORT NEWS. VIRGINIA.
SUNDAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 11, 1934

Representative Peninsula Citizens



REV. RENFORTH HAS BEEN FOR 28 YEARS PASTOR OF THE GRAFTON CHRISTIAN CHURCH AND OF THE OLIVE BRANCH CHURCH AT TOANO. THE GRAFTON CHURCH RECENTLY CELEBRATED ITS 100TH ANNIVERSARY, WHILE THE TOANO CHURCH IS BUT ONE YEAR BEHIND THIS MARK. FROM COLLEGE REV. RENFORTH WENT TO HAMPTON AND ACCEPTED THE PASTORATE OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH THERE REMAINING 7 YEARS. FROM THERE HE WENT TO YORK COUNTY AND HAS BEEN A RESIDENT OF YORK TOWN FOR THE PAST 14 YEARS.



REV. A.J. RENFORTH
YORKTOWN

AS A VICE PRESIDENT OF THE SESQUI-CENTENNIAL ASSOCIATION HE HAD AN IMPORTANT PART IN THE PREPARATION OF ONE OF THE MOST ELABORATELY IMPRESSIVE PAGENTS THE COUNTRY HAS EVER WITNESSED. HE IS A DIRECTOR OF THE FIRST NATIONAL BANK OF YORKTOWN.



FOR EIGHT YEARS REV. RENFORTH HAS BEEN SUPERINTENDENT OF THE SCHOOLS OF YORK AND WARWICK COUNTIES...



BORN AT TENNESSEE, HE ATTENDED HIGH SCHOOL AT NEW MARTINSVILLE AND THEN JOHNSON'S BIBLE COLLEGE AT KIMBERLIN, HGTS. TENN., GRADUATING IN 1898...

Grafton Christian Church Plans Centennial Celebration May 13

HISTORIC BUILDING WILL BE SCENE OF SIMPLE CEREMONY

Records of Ancient Congregation Preserved from Beginning by Book Still In Existence

One hundred years of service in York County will be celebrated Sunday May 13, by Grafton Christian Church. Preparations are now being made by the Rev. A. J. Renforth of Yorktown, pastor, and his congregation for simple commemorative exercises.

The regular morning services will be held that day at 11, at which Mr. Renforth will preach his usual sermon. The anniversary exercises proper will take place at 3 in the afternoon.

Grafton Christian Church was organized almost exactly a century before the commemorative exercises—May 11, 1834. The congregation was formed in the present building which was dedicated at the same time. There were 50 charter members, and Kemp Elliott, who really was not an ordained minister but was an elder, was the first pastor.

Ancient Church Has Dramatic History



Grafton Christian Church (above) has been standing amid a grove of majestic trees for a century. While its walls the Confederates maintained a hospital base, and then the Union forces made it a picket post and stationed their horses in it. The congregation will observe the centennial of its organization May 11, 1834, with simple exercises Sunday afternoon, May 13.

The records of the early church have been preserved in the original book, which is now in the possession of Mr. Renforth. This book, yellowed with age and apparently having been drenched—possibly by a rainstorm—at some time in the past, is clearly legible in places, though difficult to read in others.

Afternoon Program

Invitations have been extended to the Congregational and Christian churches on the lower Peninsula to attend the centennial celebration the afternoon of May 13. The pastors of these churches are expected to give brief greetings from their congregations.

A short story of the church will be read by Mrs. Walter W. Amory, and special musical selections will be sung by the choir.

The historic church is a brick structure standing a short distance north of the village of Grafton, just off the road leading into Yorktown. It stands amid a grove of beautiful trees. In its yard is a cemetery where the bodies of members of the congregation who have passed on lie buried.

The present officers of the church include John F. Thomas, the only elder, and J. G. Curtis, L. B. Amory, W. L. Nottingham, E. G. Dunn, and Charles L. Burcher, deacons. Charles Moore is superintendent of the Sunday school, and Mrs. Lula Lee Curtis is director of the choir.

The present pastor, Mr. Renforth, has occupied the pulpit for 29 years. He also has the pastorate of the Olive Branch Christian Church at Toano. It is his second pastorate. He began his ministerial work in the Hampton Christian Church, serving that charge for seven years before going to the Grafton-Olive Branch charge. He began his present pastorate Jan 1, 1905.

Mr. Renforth comes originally from West Virginia but says he is "a Virginian—it's only West Virginia because the Yankees took it away from Virginia."

His family has had a part in some of the most critical events in the European and American history. His grandfather, James Renforth, fought in the battle of Waterloo under the Duke of Wellington as a junior officer in the British army. James Renforth came to this country about 1818.

His grandmother was a daughter of the William Shephard who defended Fort Henry, which in the early days of this country stood where Wheeling, W. Va., now stands.

Doctrinal Differences

As has been not infrequently the case with other churches, the Grafton Christian Church grew out of a church schism. The record book, on its first page, says after giving the names of the initial members:

"All of these persons had been previously members of a church by the same name at the same place, and several had withdrawn; those remaining being determined not to submit to what among the Baptists

churches was known (illegible) as the 'Dover decrees,' having for their object the exclusion of all who read the publications of Alexander Campbell or went to hear those preach who favored the views taught by him; those above named also, being unwilling to submit to human creeds as a bond of union have formed themselves into a separate church with a view of keeping all the ordinances as delivered by the apostles . . ."

Campbell was one of the early leaders in the denomination today known as Christians, and from his name this church is sometimes referred to, especially in some localities, as the "Campbellite" Church.

The opening statement in the ancient record book is:

"The Congregation of Jesus Christ at Grafton in York County was organized the eleventh day of May 1834. It was composed of the following persons—"

Charter Members

In the listing of members, the men and women are listed separately. The "males" were listed as Kemp P. Elliott, pastor; John Curtis, Frederick B. Power, William Gilliam, Samuel Sheld, Thomas Minson, Churchill Boswell, Lewis Hansford, Edward Burcher, Allen Chapman, Joseph K. Nottingham, John Belvin, William Burcher, William C. Powell, John T. Hall, Thomas Wynne, Thomas Hogg, Thomas Hansford, John Garrett, Zachariah Hogg, John Hogg Jr., John Hogg Sr., William Hogg Sr., William Hogg Jr., Lewis Hogg Jr., and Bernard Elliott.

"Females" listed as original members included Sarah Boswell, Maria Sheld, Elizabeth Elliott, Mary Minson, Ann Chapman, Ann Jordan, Elizabeth Curtis, Lucy Power, Elizabeth Nottingham, Mary Powell, Zara Hansford, Mary Garrett, Elizabeth Wright, Maria Hogg, Sarah Hogg, Frances Hogg, Mary Hogg, Sarah Hogg, Mary Ratcliff, Elizabeth Thomas, and Mahala Elliott.

Records kept in the ancient book run through the year 1887 insofar as dates indicate. Apparently later than this is a tabulation of names in pencil which appears to be a list of members at the time when it was entered. There is nothing to indicate just what list of people was entered. There is nothing to indicate just what list of people was entered, nor when the entry was made.

In the front section of the book are kept minutes of congregational proceedings. Farther over is a list of later members, with the manner of their reception (baptism, from other churches, etc.); and records of the death, removal to other churches, or—in a few cases—"exclusion" of these members.

John Curtis, one of the original members, later became an elder in the congregation. He also was the donor of the land on which the church was built. The church owns approximately two acres of ground.

Died in Debate

Curtis met a dramatic end. He died in the church of which he was a charter member.

He and a Methodist minister, named Williams, were engaged in a debate at the time—Oct. 29, 1844. The old record book recounts the story.

"Our beloved elder, John Curtis, who has labored with us in word and doctrine for many years with uniring zeal and devotion, departed this life in Grafton Meeting House October 29th, 1844, a few minutes before noon. He was there for the purpose of discussing some religious difference with Mr. Williams, a Methodist. In a friendly and courteous manner, he complained when he commenced of a pain in his stomach, which increased, and after speaking about half an hour he gave way, sat down, fell, and in a few moments expired.

"His brethren and sisters of Grafton agree as a testimony of their love, sympathy, and a tribute of his worth (considering their great loss but confident of his gain) to wear garb for 30 days from his decease."

Hospital and Stable

During the Civil War the church building played a role in the affairs of both armies. The Confederate forces used it as a hospital base. Later, the Union forces used it as a picket post, and stabled their horses in it. Marks of the Union utilization of the building may still be seen.

From this church, three ministers of the gospel have gone out. Dr. Robert H. Power, who for many years was prominent in Grafton Church News, took an active part in the organization of the First Christian Church here, had a son named Frederick B. Power who entered the ministry. This son was pastor for many years of Vermont Avenue Christian Church, Washington, and conducted the funeral services for the murdered President James A. Garfield.

Two other ministers who came from the Grafton congregation were the Rev. William C. Wade, and the Rev. Richard Wynne. Mr. Wynne was a son of Humphrey H. Wynne, who was an elder in the Grafton Church for 50 years and who formerly was treasurer of Warwick County.

There was a number of Negroes whose names appear in the early records as members of the Grafton Church. These Negroes were slaves, and were designated in the records by their given names, and as "belonging to so-and-so."

Pastor



The Rev. A. J. Renforth (above) has occupied the pulpit of historic Grafton Christian Church for 29 years. He is a grandson of a junior officer who fought under Wellington at Waterloo, and began his ministry in Hampton seven years before going to Grafton.

CONTINUATION OF 100th ANNIVERSARY

NEWSPAPER STORY

APRIL 29, 1934

WILLIAMSBURG, JAMES CITY, YORK COUNTIES
20 DAILY PRESS, Newport News, Virginia, June 10, 1946

WANTED

Several Sales Girls

Part or Full Time Work

MINIMUM PAY OF

50 CENTS

AN HOUR

APPLY

CASEY'S INC.

WILLIAMSBURG

Renforth Career Held Inspiration To York

Yorktown, June 9.—The members of the congregation of Grafton Christian church today paid tribute to their former pastor, the late Rev. Andrew Jackson Renforth, at a memorial service held today in the church. A memorial tablet to his honor to be attached to the exterior of the church was unveiled by Anne Blitner Shade, granddaughter of the late pastor.

Manning Brucher presided at the service, and Christian ministers on the Peninsula participated in the exercises. The invocation was asked by the Rev. Jack Cunningham, of the Hampton Christian church. The Rev. Marion B. Brinson, pastor of the First Christian church, Newport News, read the Scripture—the same selection he read at Mr. Renforth's funeral. The Rev. Richard L. Wingfield, pastor of Olivet Christian church near Denbigh gave the benediction.

Music for the service was led by the combined choirs of the Grafton church, Crooks Memorial Methodist church and Grace Episcopal church.

The memorial address was given by the Rev. Dr. John A. Tate, Richmond, who was a classmate of and long associated with the former

Grafton pastor. Dr. Tate is secretary of the Christian churches in Virginia and chairman of the board of directors of Lynchburg college.

In his address, he pointed out that he was convinced the only stabilizing and unifying power for our world is the gospel of Christ, and that God's spirit is the only power for men.

"The New Testament," he said, "shows us this power because it has the source of power to give the world a needed moral and spiritual regeneration." He added that this service of memory is a service of exultation for all men who are calling for brotherhood because the memory of the late Mr. Renforth challenges us. "He for decades," said Dr. Tate, "exalted the spirit of Christ in his brotherliness."

Dr. Tate also gave a resume of Mr. Renforth's life and ministry. He recalled that he had served the Hampton church as his first charge and left that church to take up duties in York county. He served the Grafton church and Olive Branch church near Lee Hall for 39 years.

"He was more than a sectarian minister," Dr. Tate said in paying tribute. "He was the parson of York, Warwick and James City counties." His service to York county was one that will never be forgotten for in his sincere interests in the county activities and life he erected many memorials that will bear his memory.

As superintendent of York county schools, he brought leadership and efficiency to the county system of education. His interest in history was manifest in the untiring work he did for the Yorktown sesquicentennial. As chairman of the county welfare board he shared a rich endowment and gave counsel to many who needed assistance and help in times of trouble.

"Because he was their parson the people of Grafton church tenderly unveil the tablet that is to be attached to the walls of the church, and in so doing they give thanks to God for the memory of their beloved pastor," he said.

47
Dear Members and Friends of Grafton
Christian Church.

On Sunday, October 5, 1947 a

Rough draft of invitation to the
first Homecoming at Grafton
Christian Church. Mrs. H. R.
Burcher sent out approximately
200 handwritten invitations.

Homecoming Celebration is being planned
by the church. The program
about as follows:

10:30

11:30

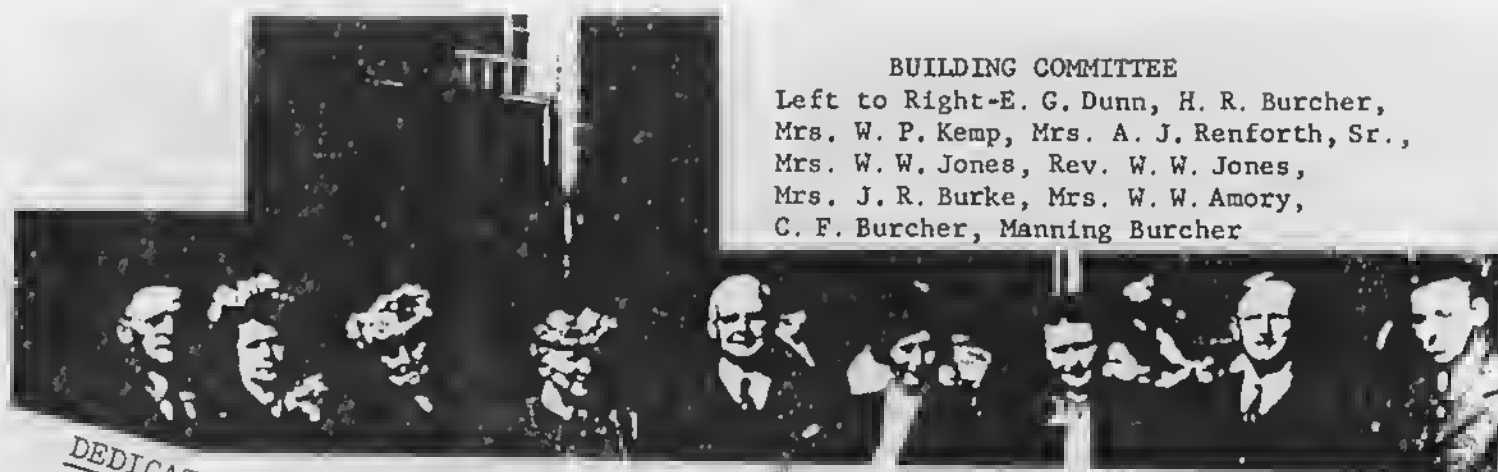
12:30

2:00

You will enjoy visiting the old
church; you will rejoice in having
fellowship with old friends; you will
give encouragement to those who are
at present bearing the church load;
you will hear about the plans for
building an addition to our church
building. We feel it will be an day

EDUCATION WING ADDED TO CHURCH BUILDING

1948-49



BUILDING COMMITTEE

Left to Right-E. G. Dunn, H. R. Burcher,
Mrs. W. P. Kemp, Mrs. A. J. Renforth, Sr.,
Mrs. W. W. Jones, Rev. W. W. Jones,
Mrs. J. R. Burke, Mrs. W. W. Amory,
C. F. Burcher, Manning Burcher

DEDICATION SERVICE - 2:00 p.m.

GRAFTON CHRISTIAN CHURCH
Willard W. Jones, Minister
May 22, 1949

Service of Dedication:
Responsive Reading
Keys officially presented to Chairman of
Church Board by Building Committee.
Charge to Superintendent of Sunday
School by Chairman of Board.
Report on Financial Situation - Page 4.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF NEW BUILDING

Cost of Building	\$16,156.81
Furniture and tableware	760.70
Total	\$16,917.51

Offering - Doxology

Sermon - TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE - Dr. John
A. Tate, Superintendent, Virginia State
Missionary Society.

Hymn - 428 - I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord

Collected to date 8,527.66
Balance due \$8,389.85



PAGEANT CAST REHEARSES AT GRAFTON

Members in a cast for a historical pageant to be presented at the Grafton Christian Church this afternoon at 2 are shown in the photo during a dress rehearsal at the church Friday night. The group will depict the events in the 120 years since the church was founded in 1834. In the first row (l to r) is Manning Burcher, Mrs. John Elliott Thomas, Robert B. Marriott, Henry Bateman and Ralph Meredith. Second row, Mrs. Wray Lee Curtis, Miss Ann P. King, Mrs. Ernest Clark, Howard Burcher, and Leo Roach. Third row, Mrs. Milburn Wood, Mrs. J. D. Davis, Mrs. Dorothy Freslone, Mrs. George Hicks, William L. Nottingham Jr. and Edward Fox.

Colorful Past Presented Today In Pageant At Grafton Christian

Grafton, April 24—The pages of history—unfolding a pageant filled with turmoil as well as achievement "in the cause of Christ" through 177 eventful years—will be turned back here tomorrow.

Perhaps no other church of its size on the Peninsula can claim a history comparable to tiny Grafton Christian Church.

A storm of dissension was responsible for its founding in 1834; it was practically destroyed in 1865. Two pastors have died while preaching from its pulpit. Early teachings there have inspired another to later become pastor of one of the largest churches in his denomination and to officiate at the funeral of a U. S. President.

Today its members will insist that there was a church before a town—or even a nation.

Grafton Christian, a plain red brick structure, stands in a grove of pine off Route 17 near this mid-county village. Tomorrow its members will gather in this quiet grove to worship together and then to retell their proud story for all to hear.

Descendants of the men who helped set the bricks for its foundation will join to re-capture the past.

The ground they will stand on is rich in church history. Two great Protestant mother churches claim this spot as a birthplace on the Peninsula. The First Baptist Church was built in 1777 on the other side of the highway.

Two years earlier a preacher named John Leland, from Grafton, Mass., had carried his Baptist teachings into York County. An early history of the first church records that as a preacher he was "probably the most popular of any that ever resided in this state." It is believed that the first church derived its name from the place of Leland's birth. It is known that the town was later named for the church.

The church grew fast. The Dover Association, a group of Baptist churches on the Peninsula, notes that Grafton had grown to a membership of 409 in 1809.

A Scotsman, Peter Ainslie, became pastor in 1827 and just five years later the great controversy, incited by reformist Alexander Campbell, exploded within the Dover churches.

When Ainslie was banned in a document famous as the Dover Decrees of 1832, his congregation voted to stand by their pastor.

In a session May 11, 1834 they voted to support him in "a solemn protest against the Decrees." They voted to organize their own church. When Ainslie announced at the same meeting that he would soon leave the church to become the first general evangelist in Tidewater, Kemp B. Elliott, his assistant, was named pastor.

The Grafton Christian Church was chartered in May, 1834 with 47 members. In 1891 a former pastor, F. D. Power, wrote in his historical account of his old pastorate: "The church of Disciples of Christ at Grafton was organized declaring it to be their full purpose and determination to acknowledge no leader but Christ, no inflexible teacher but the Apostles and prophets and no articles of belief but the Old and New Testaments."

From this date the records of Grafton church are remarkably clear and concise and, quite thorough.

Dec. 21, 1834 a committee of two were appointed to wait on a member and cite him to appear before the church on the next Lord's Day to "answer a charge on intemperance."

The Rev. Mr. Elliott died in 1837. John Curtis, second pastor since the split, died in his pulpit on a Sunday in 1844.

In 1861 the Confederate Army converted the church to a hospital to care for its wounded. A year later the Federal Army was restrained from completely destroying the building to provide materials for winter quarters.

At wars end the church members began the task of repairing their Zion. They wrote, in their records that the building "had been used as both stable and picket post and left a ruin."

A prayer meeting group was installed in 1868 and out of the first class came F. D. Power, later minister of National City Church in Washington. This product of Grafton later officiated at the funeral service of President James A. Garfield.

Grafton Christian bred still others who were to choose a higher calling. John B. Gary, baptized here in 1841, became founder of the Virginia Christian Missionary Society; W. E. Powell served as Chaplain at the Soldier's Home, Hampton.

A. J. Renforth was pastor here 39 years and Willard Innes served from 1947 until his death while preaching to a Bible class in June, 1951.

A nephew of the Rev. Mr. Jones by marriage, Robert B. Marriott, Furman University graduate and former physical education teacher at George Wythe High School, in Hampton and presently director of transportation for Warwick public schools, agreed to take over as interim pastor.

Tomorrow he will preside over the 120th anniversary celebration and the dedication of a re-decorated sanctuary. A new vestibule has been added to the original building, along

with two Sunday School rooms, a baptistry, central heating system, new carpets, drapes, communion table and a Hammond organ.

C. S. Andrews, an elder at Hilton Christian Church, worked on the architectural plans. J. Elliott Thomas of Tabb headed the building committee and supervised the entire renovation program.

Tomorrow afternoon all 250 persons will take part in the pageant, written after considerable hard work and research on the part of Mrs. Walter W. Amory and Mrs. William Sulzberger. Mrs. Mim Lemay will direct the program.

Those taking part will be Ralph Meredith, George Hicks, William Nottingham, Jr., Mesdames Marriott John Elliott Thomas; Ted Antoniewicz, Henry R. Bateman, Wray Lee Curtis, Milburn Wood, Ernest Clark, J. D. Davis, Lawrence Lindsey, Dorothy Freslone and Miss Ann Power King.

In other roles will be Howard Thomas Burcher, Edward Fox, Manning Burcher, Mrs. John King and Mrs. Fred C. Barnes.

Among the visitors will be Mrs. W. E. Wilann of Hampton, a great great granddaughter of Peter Ainslie, and Mrs. Eric Walker, great-granddaughter of John Curtis.

Tomorrow afternoon Leo Roach, a church member, will recite the same prayer uttered by James Balvir at that historic meeting 120 years ago.

"Again we come to Thee for Thy guiding hand in all of our deliberations. We ask Thy divine blessing upon our section taken here today . . . in a church which we believe is destined to grow and prosper as a guiding light in this community."

Those beliefs have long been fulfilled.



REV. R. B. MARRIOTT

← MORE PHOTOS FROM THE

120th ANNIVERSARY

NEWSPAPER ARTICLE →

April 25, 1954



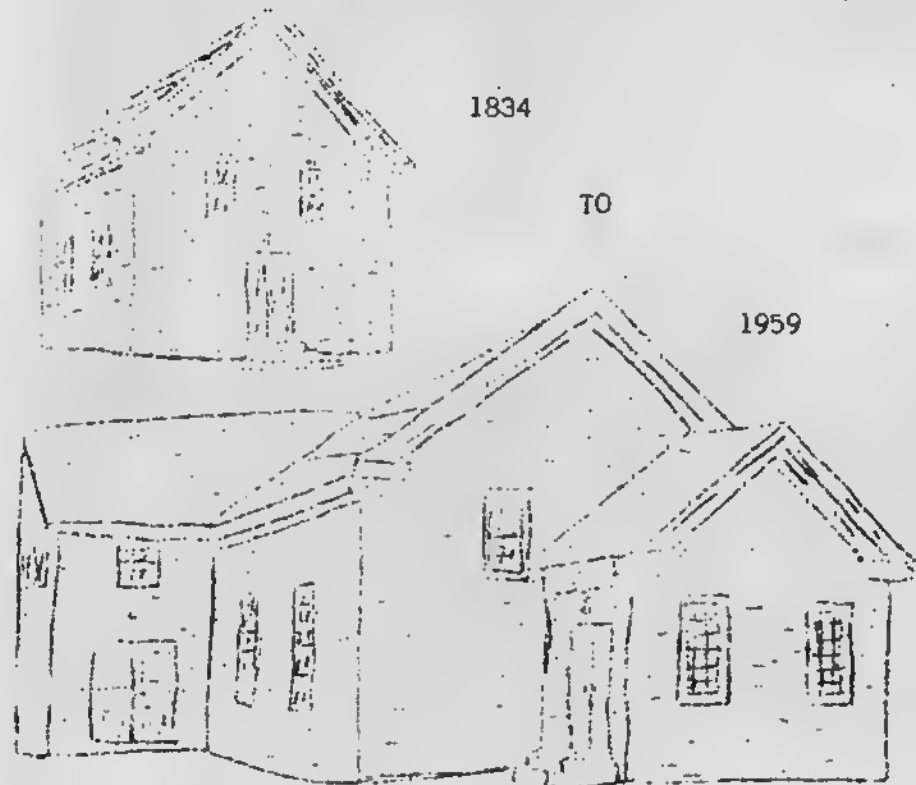
Grafton Christian As It Looks Today



Interior View Of Redecorated Sanctuary

WELCOME!
TO THE ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF
GRAFTON CHRISTIAN CHURCH (Disciples of Christ)

MAY 10, 1959



DAVID C. DERBY - MINISTER

E. B. DAVIS - CHAIRMAN OF THE OFFICIAL BOARD

MRS. L. G. WEBB - ORGANIST

PAGEANT CAST

NARRATORS	-	ROBERT MARRIOTT JOHN E. THOMAS
FREDRICK D. POWER	-	MANNING BURCHER
PETER AINSLIE	-	RALPH MEREDITH
JOHN CURTIS	-	E. B. DAVIS
KEMP ELLIOTT	-	ELIJAH WILKERSON
ALLEN CHAPMAN	-	W. L. NOTTINGHAM, JR.
JAMES BELVIN	-	EDWARD FOX
THOMAS WYNNE	-	HENRY BATEMAN
LUCY POWER	-	JANE MARRIOTT
MARY MINSON	-	DORIS HAVEN
MARIA SHIELD	-	HELEN ANTONIEWICZ
MARY POWELL	-	MARY BATEMAN
MAHALA ELLIOTT	-	CORA THOMAS
SARAH HOGG	-	AUDREY FOX
ELIZABETH NOTTINGHAM	-	HAZEL CURTIS
ELIZABETH THOMAS	-	MARGARET WOOD
MARY RATCLIFF	-	FRANCES CLARKE
ANN JORDAN	-	MARY DAVIS
A CHILD	-	DIANNE ORMAND
A YOUNG GIRL	-	ANN POWER KING
COMMENTATORS	-	DORIS BARNES DOROTHY KING

WE WISH TO THANK MRS. CORA THOMAS, MRS. DORIS HAVEN,
AND MRS. PHYLLIS DERBY FOR THEIR PART IN SECURING
AND PREPARING THE COSTUMES.

WE ARE GRATEFUL TO MRS. KATHERINE BLOW, MRS. GEORGE
EMERY, AND MRS. H. C. WAINWRIGHT FOR THE LOAN OF
COSTUMES USED TODAY.

SERVING AT THE LORD'S TABLE
E. G. DUNN, R. E. MEREDITH

SERVING THE ASSEMBLED
L. DAWSON, G. CLUVERIUS, J. WOOD, E. FOX

REPORT OF THE PASTOR
TO THE ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING OF
GRAFTON CHRISTIAN CHURCH
JUNE 10, 1959

As the first year of my ministry here at Grafton draws to a close, I should like to bring to your attention some of the forward steps which have been made this year, and to report on the Church at this time.

Other developments of major and minor significance during the year have been: The beginning of a full-time ministry, July 1, 1958; the maintenance of a Church Office with regular office hours, and a telephone; regular monthly Church Night Suppers which have proven to be worthwhile and enjoyable; a regular monthly Church Paper which is mailed to all members and friends of the Church; the beginning of an active Christian Mens' Fellowship which has been an added strength to the Church and has drawn the men of the Church into closer fellowship and cooperation. Also, this year the future building and space needs of the Church were carefully studied by a specially appointed research Committee and a recommendation for a new education and recreational building was submitted to the Official Board for approval. I am happy to say that the Board has approved this recommendation and that a Building Committee is now at work making plans for such a building. We have experienced a large increase in attendance at Worship Services and at other meetings and a general upsurge in interest in the entire Church program. The financial of the Church has increased greatly with this the greatest of all work. I want to thank all groups and individuals whom it has been my privilege to know, meet, and work with, for all that has been done so far. Let us move into our next Church Year with hope, faith, love, and thanksgiving.

Respectfully submitted,

David C. Derby, Pastor

THE GRAFTON CHRISTIAN

GRAFTON CHRISTIAN CHURCH (Disciples of Christ)

GRAFTON, VIRGINIA

PHONE - STUDY TW 8-4681, RESIDENCE TW 8-5147

DAVID C. DERBY - MINISTER

SEPTEMBER, 1962

FOR DAILY GUIDANCE ATTEND SUNDAY WORSHIP

PARSONAGE COMMITTEE REPORT

The contractor is making good progress on our parsonage. It is estimated that the work is 35-40% completed. It is the hope of the committee that we can raise approximately \$3,500.00 from pledges. To date we have received approximately \$1,100.00. In order to meet this goal, every member is urged to contribute toward this worthwhile and needed project. Members may do so by contacting any member of the parsonage committee.

E. A. Wilkerson and Mrs. W. W. Amory
Co-Chairmen

G. C. Cluverius, Jr.; W. F. Harlan
and R. R. Rollins - Members

E. A. Wilkerson
Reporter



MINISTRY CLOSES

On Sunday, September 9, Mr. Derby will lead his final service in this Church and on September 15, his resignation will be effective thus closing a ministry of four years and two and a half months.

1962

Historic Grafton Church To Hold Dedication Of Its New Parsonage

YORKTOWN — Congregation of the historic Grafton Methodist Church will dedicate the new church parsonage and hold its annual homecoming festivities Oct. 7.

Guest speaker for the homecoming will be H. Myron Kauffman, of Richmond, executive secretary of the Disciples of Christ Churches in Virginia. He will speak at the church in the morning.

A picnic dinner will be served on the church grounds.

The congregation at 2 p.m. will gather at the new parsonage.

SPEAKER



DR. H. MYRON KAUFFMAN

at Grafton, for dedication ceremonies, featuring a talk by Kauffman.

Robert B. Marriott, ordained minister and member of the congregation, will preside at both functions.

The Grafton Christian Church is in its 129th year of service to the community, having been established in May of 1834.

The early Grafton church was started before the Commonwealth of Virginia and antedated the government of the United States.

Grafton had been an organized body of believers for four years before Lord Cornwallis surrendered to General Washington, almost at the very door of the church, in 1781. The Grafton Baptist Church was constituted in 1777.

The Baptist church was rent asunder by internal dissension and in 1834 the Grafton church split from the Baptists and organized the First Disciples of Christ Church here. There were a total of 47 charter members.

During 1861, a time of depression and misfortune hit the Christian Church. Services were discontinued because the church was almost surrounded by battlefields. The Confederate Army used the building as a hospital for its sick and wounded soldiers.

The federal army took control of the Grafton Church building in 1862 and its first plans were to tear down the building and use the materials in the construction of winter quarters, but a committee of church members were successful in persuading the federals to let the building stand. Part of the building was used as a picket post and the other part as a stable.

The building left a ruin, members of the Grafton Church began re-building in 1865. Many of the members were impoverished, some moved away and others slain in battle.

The church was built and carries with it the memory of sermons from many of the great preachers from Thomas and Alexander Campbell down.

The Grafton church is acknowledged as the mother church of three churches—Newport News, Hampton and Olivet.

When the church split in 1834, a small group left the church and continued the Baptist congregation.

Thus the site of the Grafton church is the birthplace of two great Protestant communions in south Tidewater.

The Baptist church became the mother of the Baptist churches on the historic Virginia Peninsula and the church from which the first church of the Disciples of Christ in south Tidewater sprang.

The newspaper made a couple of mistakes.



Picture taken during construction Summer - 1962



Native Of Pennsylvania Takes York Church Post

YORKTOWN—The Rev. George Ewing Massay, native of Pennsylvania and son of a Disciples of Christ minister, has been named to serve as pastor of Grafton Christian Church.

Mrs. W. W. Amory, chairman of the pulpit committee, said the appointment was effective Thursday.

Mr. Massay, his wife, Alice, and six-year-old son, Jim, recently returned from France, where they served as fraternal workers in an industrial mission.

The new minister is a graduate of Bethany College, where he received his A. B. degree, and of the University of Chicago, where he received a B. D. degree.

Student ministries of Rev. Massay were in Nova Scotia, Canada, and London, England. From July 1955 to July 1961, he served as pastor of First Christian Church, Troy, Mo. For the past year, he has been a fraternal worker in St. Nazaire, France, under the social action department of the United Christian Missionary Society.

While minister in Troy, Mr. Massay served a term as president of the Troy Council of Churches. He was director of a community vacation church school. He also taught in children's camps, youth conferences and family camps.

Mrs. Massay, the former Alice Crook of Wadsworth, Ohio, also is

a graduate of Bethany College, where she was a religious major. During a visit to the Grafton Church in September, they met with the pulpit committee and Mr. Massay delivered the morning message Sept. 30.

The pulpit committee and the official board of the church unanimously recommended Massay to the congregation.

Serving with Mrs. Amory on the pulpit committee are Delores H. Harlan, Robert B. Marriott, L. Garrett Webb, George C. Cluvers Jr. and J. Elliott Thomas, ex-officio.

November, 1962



DR. L. G. McALLISTER

Grafton Church Sermon Series Begins Thursday

YORKTOWN — Dr. Lester G. McAllister, professor of modern church history at Christian Theological Seminary, a graduate seminary of the Christian churches located at Indianapolis, Ind., will preach a series of sermons at Grafton Christian Church Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings at 8 and at morning worship Sunday.

Sunday hours will follow the evening services.

Dr. McAllister formerly was a member of the faculty of Bethany College, Bethany, W. Va., and from 1944 to 1950 was national director of youth work for Christian churches.

In connection with youth work, studies and preaching exchange programs he has traveled extensively in this country and abroad.

"The Verbs of Life," "When God Says No," "Facing Life's Realities," and "When You Need Confidence" are the themes Dr. McAllister will use in his sermons.

March
19 64

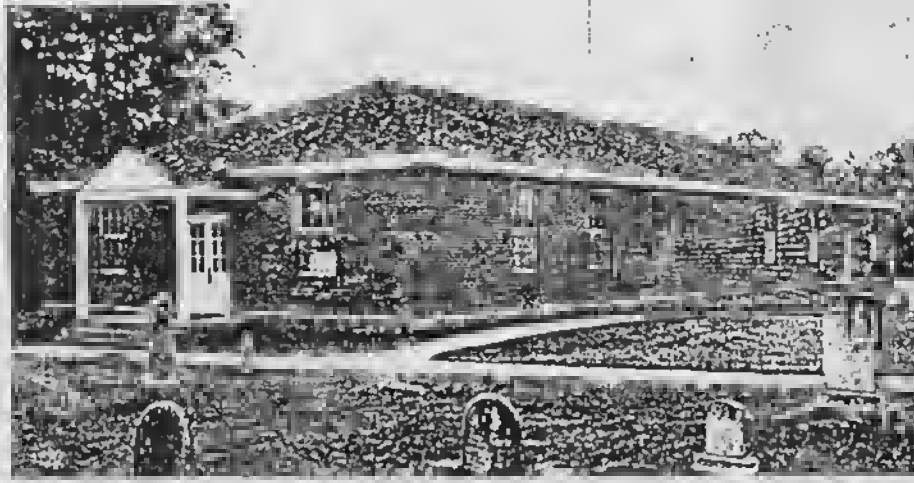
PREACHING MISSION - MARCH 12-15

Dr. Lester McAllister, a dynamic speaker, who has served the Christian Churches in several important positions of leadership, will preach a series of sermons at Grafton Christian Church Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings, March 12, 13, and 14, at 8:00 and at morning worship Sunday, March 15. Social hours will follow the evening services. The entire congregation is invited, and you are urged to invite your friends and neighbors to attend.

Dr. McAllister is professor of church history at Christian Theological Seminary, Indianapolis, Indiana, a graduate seminary of the Christian Churches. He was formerly a member of the faculty of Bethany College, Bethany, West Virginia. From 1944 to 1950 Dr. McAllister was National Director of Youth Work with the United Christian Missionary Society and during that period was responsible for important growth of the Christian Youth Fellowship and conference program. In connection with youth work, studies, and preaching exchange programs he has traveled extensively in this country and abroad.

Dr. McAllister is author of the book, Thomas Campbell: Man of the Book, and is an authority on Thomas Campbell, who with his son, Alexander, was an important leader in the founding of the Christian Churches. Dr. McAllister has given us the following as his tentative sermon topics:

- March 12 "The Verbs of Life"
- 13 "When God Says No"
- 14 "Facing Life's Realities"
- 15 "When You Need Confidence"
- or
- "Spiritual Defense"



Grafton Christian Church dedicated its recently completed education building at a Homecoming Service on Sunday, September 20, 1964. J. Stuart Wake, minister of First Christian Church, Norfolk, was guest speaker for the occasion.

The building provides facilities for church school classes for nursery through seventh grade and has a large fellowship hall and kitchen.

The Building Committee consisted of Ernest E. Amory, George C. Cluvarius and Elijah A. Wilkisson. John E. Thomas was chairman of the board during the period of construction. George E. Massey is minister.



HOMECOMING SPEAKER

The Rev. J. Stuart Wake, president of First Christian Church, Norfolk, will conduct homecoming services at 11 a.m. Sunday at Grafton Christian Church. A recently-completed education building will be dedicated during the service. A fellowship dinner will follow. Mr. Wake was president of the 1964 Virginia Convention of Christian Churches held in Martinsville.

CWF Meeting Slated Today At Grafton Church

GRAFTON — Mrs. Herman Reynolds of Lunenburg, a former missionary to India, will speak this afternoon at a fall rally of the South Tidewater District Christian Women's Fellowship at Grafton Christian Church.

Her topic will be "Speed the Plow."

She also will speak at the regular morning worship service at 11 on "Our Mission Under God." Woman's Day will be observed at the service at which women of the church will participate.

Registration for the rally will begin at 2:30 p.m. Mrs. A. E. Moore, district secretary, a member of Diamond Christian Church, Virginia Beach, will be in charge of the service. Mrs. David Shreeves, also of Virginia Beach, will conduct the worship.

Following the service a supper will be served in the fellowship hall of the church.

Mrs. Reynolds, with her husband, went to India in 1928 and spent 33 years there before retirement. She worked for 22 years in the jungle area doing evangelistic work, establishing primary schools and helping in several kindergartens and dispensaries.

The last 11 years she was in the mid-India area in charge

of women's work. Interdenominational women's work in India has grown and recently marked its 25th year.

This organization had its beginning at a Christian home meeting in the Reynolds' yard. The organization is similar to the United Church Women.

Mrs. Reynolds graduated from Lynchburg College and Butler University. She received a master's degree at Yale and attended Cornell and received her teacher's training at Madison College.



MRS. HERMAN REYNOLDS

Nov. 1, 1964

DAILY PRESS, Newport News, Va., Sat., Oct. 17, 1964

Church Services Are Announced In York County

GRAFTON —

The Christian Men's Fellowship of Grafton Christian Church will be host to the South Tidewater District Christian Men's Fellowship Thursday in the fellowship hall. Supper will be served at 7 p.m. with Mrs. H. R. Burcher, CWF service director, in charge of arrangements.

Cmdr. Robert C. McMillan, chaplain at the Naval Weapons Station, Yorktown, will be the speaker. Chaplain McMillan has pursued studies at Yale University on the Protestant reformation and will present a talk illustrated with colored slides on "What Protestants Believe."

Sunday at 6:30 p.m. the Christian Youth Fellowship and Chi Rhos will entertain the youth groups of Hampton Christian Church.

February, 1967



PREPARE FOR WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

Preparing for York County observance of the World Day of Prayer are, from left, Mrs. H. G. McComb, worship leader; Mrs. G. E. Massay, president of the York County United Church Women; and Mrs. H. B. Sudduth, wife of the pastor of St. Lukes Methodist Church. The service will be held 1:30 p.m. Friday at St. Lukes Church.

A Report on the Provisional Design for the Christian Church

By the Committee on Restructure
of Grafton Christian Church

September, 1967

Grafton - one of only two VA congregations to respond to Restructure proposal

A comprehensive study of the above mentioned design has revealed two outstanding objectionable facts:

- No. 1 There is far more organization than required or desired, with far too much power and control residing in the General and Executive Councils.
- No. 2 There is a serious threat to local congregational autonomy as Disciples have been able to practice it in the past.

Section XI

Ministry.
Ministers shall be ordained by local congregations as in the past, and upon receiving license from local civil authorities, shall perform all pastoral duties required by the congregation and church elders. A minister will not be required to be certified by any other church agency, nor shall the local congregation relinquish any of its control to any other church agency over the minister, elders, or deacons within its local church body.

The Restructure Committee

J. J. Smith, Jr., Chairman

At the meeting of the church board on September 20, 1967, the following motion was passed:

That the board recommend the proposed changes to the Provisional Design as set forth in the committee's statement or letter and further ask the congregation to express sympathy with the problems and anxieties set forth in the Atlanta Declaration.

Grafton Church To Note 135th Anniversary

YORKTOWN — Historic Grafton Christian Church will observe its 135th anniversary Sunday during the 11 a.m. worship service and a reception-luncheon in the social hall.

Honorary hostesses at the luncheon will be Mrs. A. J. Renforth Sr. of Yorktown, widow of a pastor who served the church for 39 years; and Mrs. W. A. Smith Sr. of Dare.

Mrs. Renforth is now the senior member of the congregation and Mrs. Smith is a direct descendant of the Wynne family, who were charter members of the church.

Also to be honored are members who have joined the church during the past year.

Friends of the congregation and former members are invited.

Sunday, May 11,
1969



"Miss Lula" Renforth cutting the cake; "Miss Lucy" Smith seated. Standing at right, John Elliott Thomas, Mrs. Lena Hogge, and Mrs. Ethel Morgan.

Vandals Despoil Tombstones At Historic Grafton Church



Ernest E. Amory, left, and The Rev. George Massay, discuss vandalism to gravestones at the Grafton Christian Church.

DAILY PRESS, Newport News, Virginia,
Saturday, August 5, 1972

Swilly Press - MAY 11, 1974



HISTORIC GRAFTON CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Church To Mark 140th Anniversary

YORKTOWN — Sunday, historic Grafton Christian Church, located on Brick Church Road, just off Route 17, in Grafton, will observe the 140th anniversary of its founding, May 11, 1834.

The observance will begin with the 11 a.m. worship service, and after the service there will be a covered-dish luncheon in the social hall.

WILLIAMSBURG

AREA CHURCHES

New members of the congregation will be honored and senior members, who include Mrs. A. J. Renforth Sr., whose husband was minister of the congregation for 39 years,

and Mrs. W. A. Smith Sr., who is a direct descendant of one of the charter members, will be recognized.

Mrs. W. W. Amory, a long-time member of the congregation, has written a history of the church, and copies of this will be available for distribution during the anniversary observance.

Anniversary Celebration MAY 23, 1974
YORKTOWN — The Women of Grafton Christian Church were formed 93 years ago in 1881. Now called the Christian Women's Fellowship, the group will celebrate with a covered dish birthday dinner 6:30 Thursday at the fellowship hall. Past presidents of the CWF will dress in costumes of 100 years ago.

The original officers elected in 1881 included: Mrs. D.B. Power, president; Mrs. M.E.C. Wynn, vice president; Mrs. M.E.C. Minson, treasurer; Mrs. Ann Cary Wade, assistant treasurer; Miss Lucy N. Power, secretary; Mrs. Nannie W. Lee, assistant secretary.

Those taking part on the program will be Mrs. Delores Harlan, Doris Haven, Ann Sulzerber, Doris Barnes and Jane Marriott.

The theme for the program is "Down Memory Lane." The tables will be decorated with kerosene lamps and other articles of that period.

Mrs. H. C. Wainwright will explain to the younger generation just what they are and what they were used for. All women of the church and their friends are invited.

Grafton Women To Observe Anniversary

Dressed in old fashioned clothes to suit the mood of the occasion, women of the Grafton Christian Church will observe the church's 93rd anniversary with a covered dish birthday

dinner 6:30 p.m. Thursday at the fellowship hall. From left are Catherine Ensley, Doris Haven, Ann Sulzberger and Dolores Harlan.



Grafton Church To Hold Note Burning Rites

GRAFTON-Dr. O. Eugene Moore, regional minister of the Christian Church in Virginia, will preach at the Homecoming service 11 a.m. Sunday at historic Grafton Christian Church, located just off Route 17 in Grafton.

A highlight of the service will be a note-burning, symbolizing the payment of the debt on the church's education building in just ten years. The Community Men's Chorus and the church's choir will present special music.

A covered-dish dinner will follow the service. All members, former members, and friends of the church are invited.



DR. O. EUGENE MOORE

54

DAILY PRESS, NEWPORT NEWS, VA.,

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 4, 1973



Note-Burning Ceremony
Sunday, October 7, 1973

Left to right:
George Massay
George Cluverius
Kitty Ensley
John Elliott Thomas
Linwood Burcher
O. Eugene Moore

Dear Friends,

This February 26th will be Mrs. A. J. Renforth's one-hundredth birthday. In recognition of this anniversary, the church will observe the occasion by dedicating a room on Christian novated and for other congregation.

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Daily Press

FRIDAY MORNING
Feb. 27, 1976 - Page 41

Grafton Church Plans To Honor Elderly Pair

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YORKTOWN — Mrs. A. J. Renforth Sr. of Yorktown, who celebrated her 100th birthday Thursday, and Mrs. Lucy Wynne Smith of Dare, who was 90 on Tuesday, will be honored during special services 11 a.m. Sunday at the Grafton Christian Church.

The two are long-time members of the church, which is located off Route 17 at Grafton, in York County.

Mrs. Renforth is the widow of a former minister of the church, and Mrs. Smith is a direct

descendant of one of the families who founded the congregation 142 years ago.

During the service, a recently remodeled and redecorated room, which will serve as a church parlor and library, will be dedicated in memory of Mr. Renforth, who served the church from 1906 to 1945.

Much of the renovation work in the room and in other parts of the church building has been done on a volunteer basis by members of the congregation, several of whom have given many hours of labor.

Two former ministers of the congregation will participate in the service on Sunday. David Derby, minister of the First Christian Church, Strasburg, will bring the message, and Robert Marriott of Newport News will assist in the service.

A covered-dish dinner, to which members and friends are invited, will be held in the education building following the worship service.

The Yorktown Women's Club presented a Jefferson pewter goblet to Mrs. Renforth on her birthday.

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... want to give on over-and-
... special cause.

Surely it is a rare occasion when a congregation has the chance to celebrate the one-hundredth birthday of a former minister's wife and the ninetieth birthday of a descendant of a charter member in the Bicentennial year of a great nation. We hope you and your family will be able to join in this celebration.

Sincerely yours,

George M. Rowell
George W. Rowell, Board Chairman

George E. Massay
George E. Massay, Minister

Mrs. Lula Wade Renforth, the wife of Mr. Andrew Jackson Renforth and the daughter of Mr. J. C. Wade died on March 31, 1976. She was a faithful member of Grafton Christian Church and was the oldest member. She was 100 years old. February 26, 1976.

Written by Mrs. H. R. Burcher
for church historian's record
book

The recently completed west section of the cemetery wall will be dedicated in memory of Mrs. Renforth on Sunday, May 6, 1984, as part of the church's 150th Anniversary.



Mrs. Renforth



Regional Minister

THE GRAFTON CHRISTIAN

January, 1979

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING WITH REGIONAL MINISTER

An informal meeting of the congregation will be held on Wednesday, January 24, at 7:30 p.m. in the social hall to discuss issues facing the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) with the regional minister of our church in Virginia, Lewie McPherran. Materials for study in preparation for the meeting will be available at the church on the two Sundays preceding the meeting. All members and friends of the congregation are urged to study the materials and to attend the meeting.

Grafton Christian recalls 145 years

Grafton Christian Church in York County will celebrate its 145th anniversary Sunday at the 11 a.m. service, followed by a luncheon-reception.

According to the Rev. George E. Massay, pastor for the past 16 years, three women, who have been members of Grafton Church more than 60 years, will be recognized.

They are Mrs. Nancy White of Hartfield, Mrs. Myrtle Dawson of Dandy and Mrs. Annye Mills of Hornsbyville.

Invitations have been extended to former members of the congregation to attend the observance, at which a history of the church will be given.

Grafton Christian, founded May 11, 1834, is one of the oldest churches in York County. The sanctuary, which is still used, was constructed that year of bricks made by hand on the property.

It was the only brick church in the county then and was known to local residents as "Brick Church."

Members of the congregation came from Grafton Baptist Church, which was founded near Yorktown in 1777.

Restoration and unity were watchwords of the early members. They felt the church was being divided rather

than united by creeds, so they insisted there be no creed other than the New Testament. They believed churches should be governed by the congregation and were distrustful of any clerical hierarchy.

Another tenet which influenced the early leaders of the Christian Church was: "In faith, unity; in opinion, liberty; in all things, charity." They practiced open communion from the beginning.

During the Civil War, the church building was used as a hospital by the Confederate Army and no services were held. Soldiers are buried in unmarked graves in the church cemetery. Later, the Union Army turned the church into a post.

On the building's west side, a window sill has marks still visible where a horse chewed on it. A round spot on the east wall is evidence that cannon fire struck the church.

It left the building in a poor condition and only the pleadings of the elders kept it from being razed.

In 1949, Sunday school rooms were added and the sanctuary was remodeled in 1953. In 1963, a fellowship and education building was constructed.

*145th Anniversary Celebration —
Sunday, May 6, 1979*



Artist's drawing shows how Olivet Christian Church looks on its 100th anniversary.

Olivet Church to celebrate centennial

By MADELINE DuVAL
Times-Herald Staff Writer

"100 Years With the Word" is the theme for the centennial observance of Olivet Christian Church, Newport News, next week.

Olivet Church was begun Nov. 2, 1879, by 10 members of Grafton Christian Church, York County, in a one-room school house near the Warwick Courthouse to organize a new church. Elder H. W. Wynne conducted the service; the first offering was 58 cents.

In 1880, an acre was bought from Thomas G. Wright for \$114. The old house was repaired and dedicated by the Rev. C. S. Blackwell in August 1882. The church was named Olivet Christian.

A new building was dedicated May 30, 1909, by A. J. Renforth, minister of Grafton Church, the mother church.

Robert C. Curtis, a charter member and elder, is credited with keeping the congregation together from 1889 until his death in 1918, when because of the war and a severe winter, services were discontinued.

On Sept. 30, 1919, J. Howard Hardy reopened the church with a revival, adding four new members. He was minister until his death in 1921.

SYMPOSIUM ON OVERSEAS MINISTRIES—TWO LOCATIONS

The Promotion and Communication Committee, will present a symposium in two locations concerning Overseas Ministries on Friday, December 12, Bethany, Roanoke, and the other on Saturday, December 13, at Bethany, Richmond.

Dr. Robert Thomas, president of Division of Overseas Ministries, Indianapolis, and George E. Massay, pastor, Grafton Christian Church, Grafton, will be the principal speakers. Each speaker will have a twenty minute presentation, then an opportunity to dialogue with each other. Warren Clark, chairman, will preside at each session. Questions from the floor will be invited and a concluding "listening" report will be made seeking to identify consensus in issues and those issues as yet unresolved.

Three questions that have been posed as concerns are:

1. The philosophy of Christian mission as being primarily humanistic social and political action rather than Christian evangelism and teaching, the building and strengthening of churches, and

service in the name of Christ.

2. An approach to human rights which emphasizes rights violations almost exclusively in terms of the United States and right-wing countries, while remaining virtually silent on human rights violations in left-wing and communist nations.

3. Study materials written by DOM personnel which glorify communism and fail to point out its terrible faults and which show a disregard for the value of the church and a lack of concern for freedom for the individual mind and spirit—study materials which include the misrepresentation of the thought of a Christian scholar.

If you have questions or concerns please mail them to the regional minister or bring them to one of the symposium meetings. Questions or concerns mailed to the regional minister will be shared with the speakers prior to either of the meetings.

More information concerning details will be in regional mailings and in the November *Virginia Christian*.

Two Symposia on Overseas Ministries were held in Virginia in December, 1980. George Massay and Robert Thomas presented opposing views. At left is an article from the October, 1980, *Virginia Christian*. The numbered items were written by George Massay.

Below is a news release provided by the Office of Communication of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Indianapolis to *The Disciple* and to regional publications. There have been comments that it is biased in favor of Dr. Thomas's point of view, but any publicity that shows that questions are being raised about the political bent of our outreach work is to be welcomed.

Christian Mission Awareness, Inc.
Post Office Drawer 1527
Grafton, VA 23692

Ministers Debate

ROANOKE, Va.—A Virginia minister, disturbed over Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) mission policies, got an opportunity in a regionally-sponsored symposium to debate the issue with the Disciples' chief overseas officer.

In one of two meetings in different Virginia cities, George E. Massay, minister of Grafton Christian Church, charged that the denomination supports communism through its overseas work.

Robert A. Thomas, Indianapolis, Ind., president of the Disciples' Division of Overseas Ministries, denied the charges, saying that the church is found "behind all kinds of political curtains," and it is the church there that the North American denomination supports, not Communist governments.

Both agreed that the Christian faith is the standard for judging all political and economic systems, but disagreed on whether the church

condemns equally the human rights violations of the political left and right. Mr. Massay argued that it doesn't, charging that church money goes for Communist causes, adding "Love your enemies" does not mean everybody is our friend and we can subsidize their sins."

Dr. Thomas told the 50 participants here, including members of the Grafton congregation with views opposing those of their minister, that the New Testament demands that Christians share with the poor and oppressed, helping them find hope.

"It is possible in a tiny degree through the love of God expressed in Jesus Christ. There is no hope in the world except through that love," Dr. Thomas added.

Mr. Massay acknowledged that there is division in his congregation over his view, adding that he is concerned that the church has "embraced a particular political philosophy as the solution to the ills of the world."

Dr. Thomas pointed out that the church in North America is in partnership with churches around the world. "Are we to refuse to re-

late, to refuse to pray for them, Christians, for all people?" he asked.

Mr. Massay questioned established relationships with the Christian Pentecostal Church in Cuba while not aiding Indian Disciples of Christ churches.

Dr. Thomas said the Cuban church is "asking only for some sense of Christian fellowship with us." The Indian Disciples of Christ voted overwhelmingly 10 years ago to enter the Church of North India although some stayed out because of "family feuds, not theological disagreement" and to receive money promised by some missionaries unhappy with the union, he said.

"That is an example of how persons formerly related to the church cannot bear to see it change. They continue to the best of their ability to direct, change and give leverage to church policy from outside the country," Dr. Thomas said.

"We are not in control of what is happening in the churches around the world. Christians there are taking their own direction from God and their internal situation. They will not be managed from outside," he concluded.

Ministers' investigations preceded media furor

By SALLY PRICE
Staff Writer

It began with a church denominational study book called "China Speaks to Our Time."

The Rev. John H. Knibb Jr., minister of Hampton Christian (Disciples of Christ) Church in Hampton, thought the book glorified the accomplishments of the Chinese Communists but didn't portray the lack of religious and political freedom in China.

Meanwhile, the Rev. George E. Massay, minister of Grafton Christian (Disciples of Christ) Church in York County, was equally upset over a book that glorified friendly ties between Cuba and other Caribbean nations.

What bothered both ministers was that the books were published by their denomination, one of 32 denominations that belong to the National and World Council of Churches. It was further proof, they thought, of the "leftist" direction Christian missionary work through the ecumenical councils.

As a result, Massay, Knibb, their wives and a few other concerned individuals in Fredericksburg founded in 1980 Christian Mission Awareness, or CMA.

The non-profit group, headed by Massay, has worked to strengthen Christian missions in the world by creating awareness of "activities and trends which might weaken the church's witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ," according to a CMA brochure.



John H. Knibb Jr.

"We feel that Christian missions should address the physical needs but should also address the spiritual needs," says Massay. "As Christians, you have to give the cup of water in the name of Christ."

Yet through the World Council of Churches and National Council of Churches only physical needs are being considered, says Massay.

Moreover, the councils have become more politically involved in the last 20 years. "We have moved from feeding and clothing people to advocating changing the structures of society by violent means if necessary," he says.



George E. Massay

Although the NCC says it doesn't give money to Communist groups, Knibb responds: "Their own documents say they do."

Massay: "Perhaps even more serious is the admiration they hold for leftist governments."

Long before the councils' work became grist for media controversy, like a Jan. 23 '60 Minutes' telecast, the Virginia CMA members had been studying documents in the Library of Congress, writing letters to council and government representatives and interviewing refugees in order to learn about the councils' work.

What they found is that even those in the upper echelons of council administration often

don't know where the money is going.

"We provided the information and documentation about money going to economic zones (in Vietnam)," says Massay.

Some of their information was used in a "Reader's Digest" article that attacked the councils.

He says the councils' gift of a million dollars to the Vietnam government to build "new economic zones" is "comparable to churches giving money to Stalin or Hitler to build their labor camps."

The zones were "ostensibly" created to improve agricultural use of the land, Knibb says. He contends that the zones are actually forced-labor camps whose real mission is not to produce food — but to control people.

The zones were described in a 1982 "Business Week" as "remote and desolate environments used for exiling dissidents, as well as for prisoners taken after the end of the war against Saigon."

Massay's church will offer a resolution condemning these missions at a denominational meeting Sept. 23-28 in St. Antonio, Texas.

Both Massay's and Knibb's churches have introduced such resolutions in past conventions, but they have not passed.

Despite their uphill battle, both Massay and Knibb say they would never recommend that

their denomination leave the councils.

"You lose your influence when you withdraw. ... Renewal comes from within," says Knibb.

"We would never withdraw," says Massay. "We feel like the denominational hierarchy have left us. We have never left our historical position."

Newport News - Hampton, VA
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CHRISTIAN MISSION AWARENESS, INC.
Post Office Drawer 1527
Grafton, VA 23692

RESOLUTION CONCERNING PUBLICITY ON RECONCILIATION FUNDS

WHEREAS, the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organizations (IFCO) led a coalition including communists which forced community leaders to permit an Anti-Ku Klux Klan rally and protest march in Greensboro, North Carolina, on February 2, 1980, just three months after five persons were killed in that city during a Communist Workers Party Death-to-the-Klan rally, even though the February 2 rally was opposed by the black clergy association of Greensboro and was not supported by any members of the white clergy of that city, and

WHEREAS, the Director of IFCO has indicated an intention to continue working in a coalition with communists, and

WHEREAS, IFCO has received some of the largest grants made by the General Reconciliation Committee of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), e.g., \$18,500.00 in 1976; \$21,500.00 in 1977; and \$23,400.00 in 1978—the most recent figures available in the Yearbook & Directory of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ),

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) meeting in Anaheim, California, July 31-August 5, 1981, that publicity sent to churches and ministers from the international offices of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) regarding Reconciliation funds clearly state that substantial grants from the General Reconciliation Fund go to a group that works in coalition with communists

Grafton Christian Church
Grafton, Virginia

RESOLUTION CONCERNING HUMAN RIGHTS AND ECUMENICAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

WHEREAS, the extension of human rights is a high priority of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and

WHEREAS, ecumenical agencies have frequently set forth the principle that no financial aid should be given to governments which flagrantly abuse human rights, as, for example, when Ninan Koshy, International Affairs Director of the World Council of Churches (as reported in THE CHRISTIAN CENTURY, December 1, 1982, page 1224) objected to an International Monetary Fund loan to South Africa, asserting that the loan comes at a time when "repression is mounting in South Africa" and that those who support such a loan "continue to undergird the policies of the South African regime," and

WHEREAS, the flagrant abuse of human rights by the government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam has been documented by Amnesty International and many other groups and persons, including United Methodist Bishop James A. Armstrong, President of the National Council of Churches, who on the television program, "Firing Line," taped September 24, 1982, and telecast later by PBS, in speaking of Vietnam, said, "There continues to be the violation of human rights. There's no question about that," and

WHEREAS, the Indochina Consortium of the World Council of Churches and the Christian Conference of Asia during 1979 and 1980 gave large sums of money to projects initiated and directly administered solely by the repressive government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, including, according to Church World Service, one million dollars to the "Hanoi New Economic Zone," located in the Province of Lam Dong in southern Vietnam, and one million dollars to the Mylam Agricultural Settlement, located in the Mekong Delta, and, in addition, funded projects of the government of Laos in the amount of more than one million dollars, and

WHEREAS, Church World Service participated in the Indochina Consortium and gave \$400,000.00 to it, of which at least \$10,000.00 was contributed by Week of Compassion of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ),

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) meeting September 23-28, 1983, in San Antonio, Texas, request Disciples representatives to the World Council of Churches, the National Council of Churches, Church World Service, and other ecumenical bodies and agencies, to work for the firm establishment and scrupulous carrying out of a policy of avoiding the funding of development projects administered by repressive governments, regardless of the political ideology of those governments, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the said representatives be requested to encourage ecumenical bodies and agencies to fund only development projects in which there is meaningful protection of human rights, particularly the right of free religious expression

Grafton Christian Church
Grafton, Virginia

News from the Nation Virginia in the Greater Context

Virginians Attend San Antonio Assembly



George Massay, Grafton, Va., speaks from floor microphone during a business session of the September 23-28 General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) at San Antonio, Texas. (Christian Church News Photo)



*First section
of cemetery
well-built
in the spring
of 1983 -
Harold
Williams,
Property
Chairman*

SERVICE OF ORDINATION TO THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY
Sunday, April 24, 1983, 4:00 P. M.

ORGAN PRELUDE
CALL TO WORSHIP AND INVOCATION Thomas Stokes
*HYMN "O Master, Let Me Walk With Thee" 307
WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS George Massay
SCRIPTURE READING II Corinthians 4:1-11 John Knibb
PASTORAL PRAYER Joe Parrish
ANTHEM "Give of Your Best to the Master"
INTRODUCTION OF DR. RICHARDSON Thomas Stokes
SERMON "We Have This Treasure" William Richardson
PRESENTATION OF THE CANDIDATE, JAMES MASSAY Leo Roach
ORDINATION VOWS
*RESPONSE OF CONGREGATION
LAYING ON OF HANDS ORDINATION PRAYER - Frank Forehand
CHARGE TO THE NEWLY ORDAINED MINISTER Gerald Stemm
PRESENTATION OF ORDINATION CERTIFICATE Jimmie Collins
and Jennie Singleton
James Massay
RESPONSE
*HYMN "Rise Up, O Men of God" 374
*CLOSING REMARKS George Massay
*PRAYER OF CONSECRATION AND BENEDICTION Elwood Campbell
*POSTLUDE

Linwood G. Burcher and George W. Rowell, Elders and
Worship Committee members, Grafton Christian Church
Gary Michaelis, John Teague, and Earl Young, Ushers

A RECEPTION, to which everyone present is invited, will
be held in the social hall following the service. Edna
Teague, Grafton's Membership Chairmah, is in charge.

January, 1984 *Virginia Christian*



Participants in the Hampton Christian Church Centennial Celebration on
October 9: (from the left) John H. Knibb, Jr., Pastor; Dr. Lester G. McAllister,
Guest Speaker; John Thomas Parks, Church Board Chairman; George E.
Massay, Pastor of the Grafton Christian Church, Hampton's "mother"
church.

HAMPTON CHRISTIAN CHURCH

1883

Centennial Celebration
October 9, 1983

1983

ABOUT THE HAMPTON CHRISTIAN CHURCH —

The Hampton Christian Church came into being largely through the efforts
of William A. Tennis, a deacon of the Grafton Christian Church in York Coun-
ty, Virginia. Brother Tennis moved with his family to Hampton in the autumn
of 1882. He located several fellow Disciples, and held an organizational meeting
in the home of R.B. Tennis on February 18, 1883. The group was first known
as the Hampton Christian Mission. In 1888, it was officially chartered as a church.

RECENT HISTORY

CHURCH ACTIVITIES

THANKSGIVING BREAKFAST has been served in the social hall annually since 1969. Jerry Karwac, Sr., has cooked every year.

CWF SERVICE PROJECTS include baking for the Patrick Henry Hospital Fair, collecting food and money for the York Emergency Food Cupboard, and supplying craft items for Vacation Bible School. CWF Service Department for 1983-84 has been Joan Collins, Polly Renforth, and Dolores Harlan.

CHRISMONS were made under the direction of Hope Cluverius in the fall of 1980, and there has been a Chrismon tree each Christmas since. Roland, Betty, and Dennis Rollins have given several trees.

A CHRISTMAS PAGEANT with a speaking part for each child and young person from first grade through high school has been presented each year since 1972.

FAMILY COVERED-DISH CHRISTMAS PARTIES have been enjoyed every holiday season since 1967.

THE CHOIR'S CANTATA and the CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE inspire us each year.

YEARLY VALENTINE PARTIES for patients and staff at Eastern State Hospital began in 1980. Jennie Singleton has planned all the parties.

EASTER WEEK OF PRAYER SERVICES have been held prior to the Palm Sunday baptismal service since 1970. CWF Worship Department for 1983-84 has been Charlene Williams, Kitty Ensley, Emily Kiser, and Ruth O'Steen.

CWF YEARBOOKS first appeared in 1966 and have been prepared each year by Alice Massay.

A PROGRAM OF BEAUTIFICATION of the church buildings and grounds was begun in April, 1978. The Beautification Committee appointed at that time consisted of George Rowell, Chairman, Kitty Ensley, Maxine Moore, Dexter Haven, and John Elliott Thomas.

ITEMS OF INTEREST FROM THE GRAFTON CHRISTIAN (Monthly church newspaper)

January, 1967 - William L. Hungate, U. S. Congressman from Missouri and a member of the Christian Church, will speak to the District CMF meeting to be held in the fellowship hall of Grafton Church on Friday, January 27, at 7:00. The women of the church will serve the meal. All men are cordially invited.

March, 1979 - Our congregation has the opportunity to have Marilynne Hill, national director of the Week of Compassion, as our speaker at morning worship on Sunday, March 18, when we shall have our observance of that emphasis. Volunteers are needed to drive to Richmond to get Miss Hill that morning and to take her back in the afternoon. Anyone willing to help with this is asked to contact Outreach Chairman Kitty Ensley.

January, 1978 - The new carpeting will be installed in the sanctuary on Friday, December 30, and should be in place for the worship service on New Year's Day. The cost, installed, is \$1,053.72.

October, 1980 - Best wishes to Betty Larew, who will be leaving late in October for an assignment with the State Department. She will be working in the American Embassy in Paris, France.

February, 1983 - The land across the road from the church, which has been used for many years as a parking lot, was not, as many people assumed, the property of the church, but belonged to the Curtis family. Hazel Curtis and her daughter, Carrie Wray Curtis, have recently made a gift to the church of this property. Thanks to you both, on behalf of the congregation, for this fine gift!

Our minister, George Massay, opened the daily session of the Virginia House of Delegates with prayer on January 18 [1983]. Arrangements were made by Delegate Shirley Cooper [a member of our congregation].

MORE RECENT HISTORY FROM THE GRAFTON CHRISTIAN

Special Speakers:

- October 23 and 24, 1982 - Dr. and Mrs. John Ross, who served for 25 years as missionaries to the Belgian Congo (now Zaire) in Africa under the United Christian Missionary Society of the Disciples of Christ
- November 7, 1982 - Dwight McSmith, lay preacher and elder of the Hampton Christian Church
- May 22, 1983 - Chaplain Carl Cooper of Patrick Henry Hospital
- October 30, 1983 - Rev. Samuel (Sammy) Nathaniel, pastor of the Christian Church at Bilaspur, India, a congregation of 800 members, witnessing and serving as a result of the work of Disciple missionaries -- a work which began in India just over a hundred years ago

Other recent items:

- March, 1983 - The Property Committee is asking that members and friends of the church make over-and-above contributions to a fund to pay for roofs for the church's buildings. New roofs will be needed in the near future, and a special fund has been established within the Building Fund. Please use Building Fund envelopes and mark them "Roof Fund."
- June, 1983 - At the Regional Assembly at Lynchburg College in May, Ann Sulzberger was elected a member at large of the Regional Board of the Christian Church in Virginia.
- July, 1983 - Congratulations to David Kelly, who has just left for Japan, where he will represent York High School as a summer exchange student.

Leadership of Grafton Christian Church

CHURCH STAFF George E. Massay, Minister; Emily R. Kiser, Organist; Alice C. Massay, Secretary; Roy L. Belvin, Custodian

CHURCH BOARD Leo O. Roach, Chairman; James L. (Bodee) Riggins, Vice Chairman; Penny Cook, Secretary; Catharine Ensley, Glerk; Jennie Singleton, Historian; Omar W. White, Financial Secretary; John Herbener, Jr., Treasurer

Elders: Couldin F. Beasley, Linwood G. Burcher, Grayson E. Fox, George W. Hamm, Welford F. Harlan, Jerry R. Karwac, Sr., William L. Nottingham, Lee W. Raybourn, James L. Riggins, Leo O. Roach, George W. Rowell (deceased), Omar W. White

Deacons: Leonard I. Alger, William E. Cook, William S. Daniel, III, George L. Francisco, Frank G. Kelly, Gary P. Michaelis, John A. Neese, Charles L. Oaten, Roland R. Rollins, Wayne M. Schell, John N. Teague, Sr., Donald A. Trulitt, Thomas S. Voss, Harold C. Williams, James E. Witt

Deaconesses: Doris Barnes, Joan Collins, Penny Cook, Catharine Ensley, Louise Freeman, Nonie Herbener, Emily Kiser, Marie Smith, Edna Teague, Kathleen Teague, Charlene Williams, Virginia Young

TRUSTEES OF THE CHURCH Theodore W. Antoniewicz, R. Leslie Dawson, William Edward Fox, Leo O. Roach, John N. Teague, Sr.

TRUSTEES OF THE CEMETERY FUND Linwood G. Burcher, Jimmie W. Collins, Grayson E. Fox, Doris M. Haven, Earl L. Young

FUNCTIONAL COMMITTEES Worship: James L. Riggins, Chairman;
Doris Barnes, George W. Rowell (deceased),
Joseph J. Smith, Jr., Charlene Williams

Stewardship: George W. Hamm, Chairman; Kitty Ensley,
Doris Haven, Wayne M. Schell, Donald A. Truitt,
Harold C. Williams

Outreach: Joan Collins, Chairman;
George L. Francisco, Lewis L. Hartley,
Thomas S. Voss, Charlotte Wilkerson

Christian Education: Emily Kiser, Chairman; Louise Freeman,
Gary P. Michaelis, Linda Riggins, Mary Kay Schell

Evangelism and Membership: John N. Teague, Sr., Chairman;
Jerry Karwac, Sr., Cheryl Kelly, Lee W. Raybourn, Edna Teague,
Virginia Young

Property: John A. Neese, Chairman,
Leonard I. Alger, Robert S. (Rod) Clark,
William E. Cook, Hazel Curtis,
William L. Nottingham, James E. Witt

SUNDAY SCHOOL STAFF Superintendent - Gary Michaelis

Assistant Superintendent - John Teague, Sr.

Teachers and Substitutes - Kathy Teague, Debbie Alger, Pam Fox,
Debbie Clark, Louise Freeman, Mary Kay Schell, Linda Riggins,
Joan Collins, Jennie Singleton, Nila Hansford, Virginia Young,
James L. Riggins, Alice Massay, Myrtle Green, Cecile Woolard,
Ann Sulzberger CHURCH NURSERY CHAIRMAN - Candy Neese

YOUTH SPONSORS Ann and Lew Hartley, Nila Hansford, Emily Kiser,
Gary Michaelis, Alice and George Massay

1983 VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL STAFF Jennie Singleton, Director;
Candy Neese, Ann Hartley, Pam Fox, Marie Smith, Debbie Clark, Debbie
and Lennie Alger, Mary Kay Schell, Shirley Cooper, Kathy Teague,
Linda Riggins, Ruth O'Steen, Joan Collins, Emily Kiser, Ginny Young,
Edna and John Teague, Cindy Teague, Patty Bender, Barbara and Don
Truitt, Elizabeth Moore, Debbi Butler, Tammy King, Cindy O'Steen,
Margaret Riggins, Anne Young, Steve Francisco, Doug Hartley,
Jeffrey Singleton, Alice and George Massay

OFFICERS OF THE CHRISTIAN MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

President - Lee Raybourn
Vice President - Dexter Haven
Secretary - Joe Smith
Treasurer - Ted Antoniewicz
Food Chairman - Welford Harlan

CHRISTIAN WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP EXECUTIVE BOARD

President - Nila Hansford
Vice President - Virginia Young
Secretary - Doris Barnes
Treasurer - Cheryl Kelly
Director of Worship - Charlene Williams (1983-84)
- Betsy Deal (1984-85)
Director of Service - Joan Collins
Hospitality Chairman - Marie Smith (1983-84)
- Edna Teague (1984-85)
Subscriptions Chairman - Nonie Herbener
Morning Group Chairman - Linda Riggins (1983-84)
- Jennie Singleton (1984-85)
Group II Chairman - Ann Sulzberger (1983-84)
- Elsie Halverson (1984-85)
Group III Chairman - Nonie Herbener (1983-84)
- Charlene Williams (1984-85)

CWF NOMINATING COMMITTEE - Candy Neese, Charlotte Wilkerson,
Pearl Sawyer

OFFICERS OF THE YOUTH GROUP

President - Douglas Hartley
Vice President - Robert Thompson
Secretary - Stephanie Singleton
Treasurer - Jeffrey Singleton

PERSONS HOLDING LONGEST CONTINUOUS MEMBERSHIP IN CRAFTON
CHRISTIAN CHURCH - Mrs. R. W. (Myrtle) Dawson, Mr. Ernest E. Amory

OLDEST LIVING MEMBERS - Mrs. T. J. (Nancy) White,
Mrs. John (Ella) Herbener, Sr.

NEW MEMBERS who have joined the church during the 150th Anniversary
year and will be honored at the anniversary celebration:

Mrs. L. O. (Delcie) Roach, Jr., Leslie Clark, Jennifer Hamm,
Neil Hartley, and Cassandra Woolard

BABIES dedicated on January 29, 1984: Megan Suzanne Voss, born to
Susan and Tommy Voss on May 13, 1983, and Meredythe Courtney Massay,
born to Edie and Jim Massay on June 19, 1983

GRADUATES - Cyndi Sulzberger from Valdosta State College, Valdosta,
Georgia - December, 1983

1984 High School Graduates: John Aldredge, Sheri Fagg,
George Francisco, David Kelly, Karen Rowell, Ray Thompson

Master's Degrees: Jim Massay, Emmanuel School of
Religion, Johnson City, Tennessee
Charlene Williams, George Washington
University

Ph. D. in Accounting: Wayne Schell, Virginia Tech

DELEGATES to General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of
Christ), San Antonio, Texas, September, 1983: Doris Barnes, Penny Cook
ALTERNATES: William Cook, Alice Massay

DELEGATES to Regional Assembly of the Christian Church in Virginia,
Richmond, Virginia, May, 1984: Doris Barnes, Dolores Harlan, Ann and
Bill Sulzberger ALTERNATES: Welford Harlan, Alice Massay

IN MEMORIAM

George W. Rowell, who died February 8, 1984, served
Crafton Christian Church in many capacities. A man
of humble and willing spirit, a hard worker, a good
thinker, and a loyal friend, he was an inspiration
to all who knew him.

This book is gratefully dedicated to the memory of
George Rowell and the countless others who, through
the past 150 years, have given unselfishly of their
time, talents, and money so that Grafton Christian
Church might bear witness to the community and the
world of the Good News of Jesus Christ.



GRAFTON CHRISTIAN CHURCH

will celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the congregation
on Sunday, May 6, 1984.

We hope you will join us for this celebration.

At the 11 o'clock morning worship service
Jim Massay, who is doing a study of the church's
history, will bring a message.

There will be a special service of worship and
remembrance at 4:00 in the afternoon. The speaker at
that time will be Dr. Lester G. McAllister, interim
minister at Seventh Street Christian Church, Richmond,
who has recently retired as Professor of Church History
at Christian Theological Seminary, Indianapolis. He is
author of Thomas Campbell: Man of the Book and is the
co-author with Dr. William E. Tucker of a history of the
Disciples, Journey in Faith.

Following the afternoon service, there
will be a covered-dish supper in the social hall
with time for reminiscing, visiting, and fellowship.